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SUNDAY

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TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

CASSIE BERNALL

STEVEN CURNOW

COREY DEPOOTER

KELLY FLEMING

MATTHEW KECHTER

DANIEL MAUSER

DAN ROHRBOUGH

DAVE SANDERS

RACHEL SCOTT

ISAIAH SHOELS

HOSPITALIZED

RICHARD CASTALDO
SEAN GRAVES
ANNE MARIE HOCHHALTER
PATRICK IRELAND
LANCE KIRKLIN
LISA KREUTZ
JEANNA PARK
KASEY RUEGSEGGER
VALEEN SCHNURR
MARK TAYLOR
UNNAMED BOY, 15

JOHN TOMLIN

LAUREN TOWNSEND

KYLE VELASQUEZ

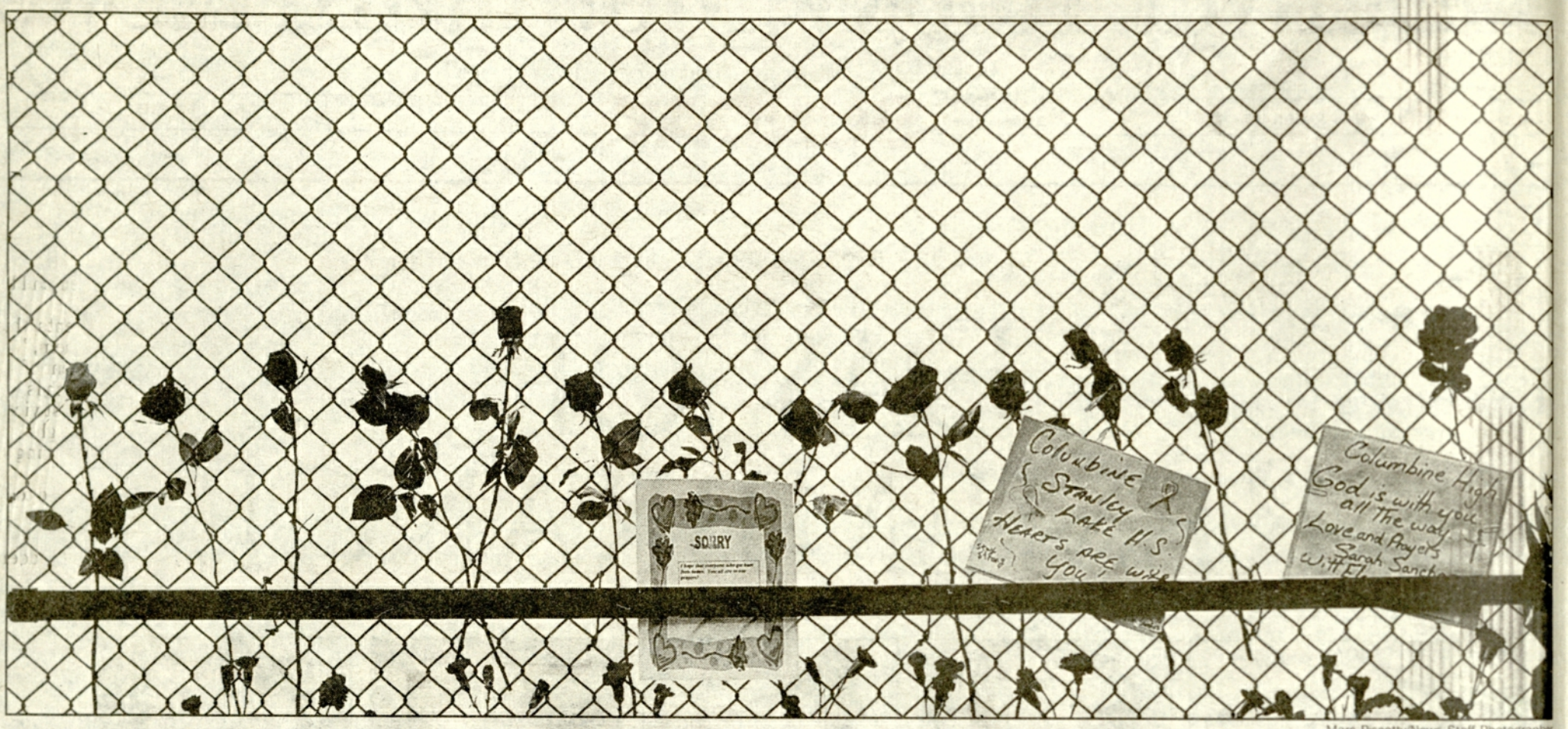
TREATED AND RELEASED

BRIAN ANDERSON
JENNIFER DOYLE
STEPHEN AUSTIN EUBANKS
NICK FOSS
MAKAI HALL
JOYCE JANKOWSKI
MARK KINTGEN
ADAM KYLER
STEPHANIE MUNSON
PATRICIA NIELSON
NICOLE NOWLEN
DAN STEEPLETON

STORIES OF THE 13 SLAIN. PAGE 11AA

32-PAGE SPECIAL SECTION

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE



Marc Piscotty/News Staff Photographer

Thirteen roses, representing the gunmen's victims, hang from the chain-link fence that surrounds the Columbine High School tennis courts on Saturday.

Gunmen had it all mapped out

Journal records details, intent to kill hundreds

By Kevin Vaughan and Karen Abbott
News Staff Writers

For a year they plotted, their anger and hurt fueling plans to rain death on bustling Columbine High School on Adolf Hitler's birthday.

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold mapped out their fantasy in a detailed handwritten journal and in notations scrawled on a diagram of the school — "good place to hide here," "eleven o'clock largest number in cafeteria."

And they planned it down to the last detail, that shortly after 11 a.m. Tuesday it would be time to "rock and roll," Jefferson County Sheriff John Stone said Saturday, describing the journal that gave investigators a blueprint of the siege.

It ended with 15 dead, including Harris and Klebold, and 23 hospitalized.

And it could have been so much worse.

The death toll, investigators believe, could have easily climbed into the hundreds if the two teenagers' bombs had exploded as planned.

An explosive built out of a pipe bomb, two propane tanks and several smaller fuel cylinders would have blown the cafeteria area to "smithereens," an official said.

"The bottom line of this thing is, they wanted to do as much damage as they could possibly do and destroy this school and destroy as many children as they could and go out in flames," a somber Stone said.

"They expected to die."

The new details of the planning of Harris, 18, and Klebold, 17, emerged as victim Rachel Joy Scott's family and friends said goodbye in a televised memorial. Klebold's family also held a private service for their son.

His parents, Thomas and Susan Klebold, said in a statement later released through their attorney that they loved him "as much as we know how to love a child."

"Our sadness and grief over his death and this tragedy is indescribable," the statement said. "We again apologize to all those who have also suffered a loss of their loved one and we continue to pray for the recovery of those who were injured.

"We would also like to extend our gratitude to those who have offered their support and sympathy during this grieving period."

Detectives worked most of the day Saturday but planned to take today off. Many will attend today's public memorial service near the school. Vice President Al Gore is scheduled to attend the service, which begins at 1 p.m. in the Mann Theater parking lot at the Bowles Crossing Shopping Center.

As a grieving community staged another tribute to a fallen Colum-

See COLUMBINE on 23A

UP TO 30,000 EXPECTED AT MEMORIAL

News Staff

Organizers expect up to 30,000 people to attend today's memorial service led by Vice President Al Gore and Gov. Bill Owens for the victims of the Columbine High School tragedy.

The 1 p.m. service will be in the Mann Theatre parking lot at Bowles Crossing, West Bowles Avenue and Long Drive, just east of South Wadsworth Boulevard. It is across the street from Clement Park.

Gore and Owens will speak, and the memorial will include performances by Christian singers Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith. The son of the Rev. Billy Graham, Franklin Graham, also will speak.

Denver Catholic Archbishop Charles Chaput will give the opening prayer.

The service is open to everyone.

The following roads will be closed for the service:

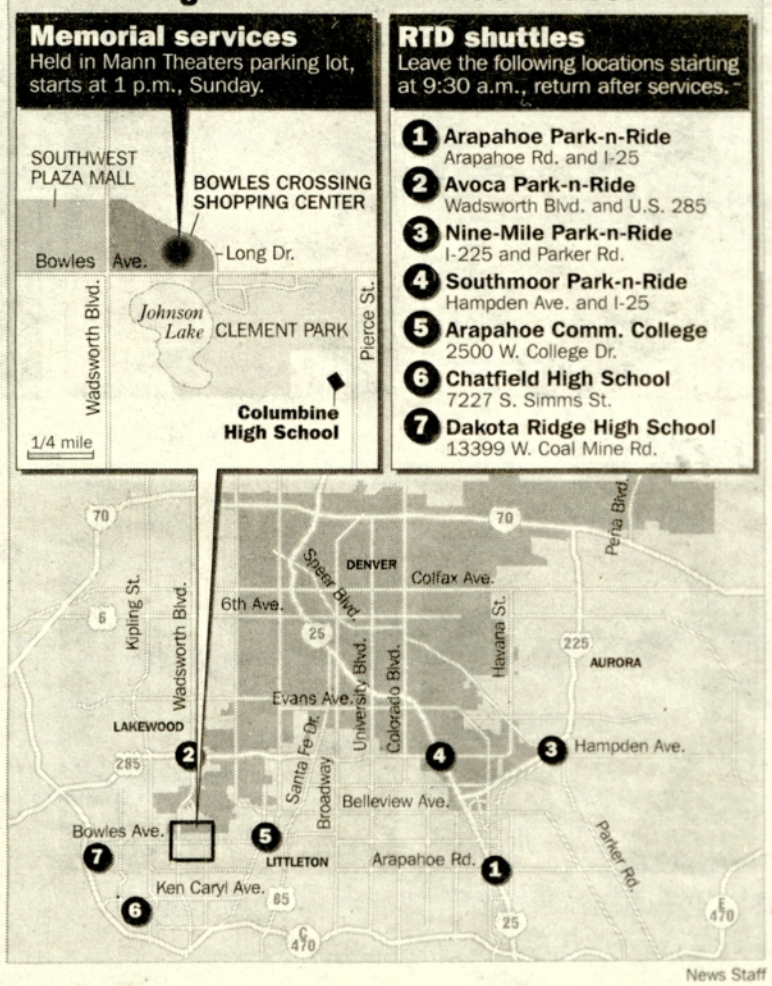
- South Pierce Street from West Bowles to Coal Mine avenues.
- Luna Drive from South Wadsworth Boulevard to South Pierce Street.
- West Bowles Avenue from east of South Wadsworth.

Attending the memorial services:

Memorial services
Held in Mann Theaters parking lot, starts at 1 p.m., Sunday.

RTD shuttles
Leave the following locations starting at 9:30 a.m., return after services.

1. **Arapahoe Park-n-Ride** Arapahoe Rd. and I-25
2. **Avoca Park-n-Ride** Wadsworth Blvd. and U.S. 285
3. **Nine-Mile Park-n-Ride** I-225 and Parker Rd.
4. **Southmoor Park-n-Ride** Hampden Ave. and I-25
5. **Arapahoe Comm. College** 2500 W. College Dr.
6. **Chatfield High School** 7227 S. Simms St.
7. **Dakota Ridge High School** 13399 W. Coal Mine Rd.



News Staff

Traffic delays of about 30 minutes are expected in these areas from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

VIP and handicap parking is available at the south side of the Mann Theater at Bowles Crossing across from the Columbine Library. Free RTD shuttle service for the general public begins at 9:30 a.m. today and will run each half-hour or as buses fill. The last pickup at all the Park-n-Ride lots will be at noon.

The shuttles will provide transportation back to the lots after the service ends.

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

IN MEMORY OF

RACHEL SCOTT

17-year-old girl 'shined for God at all times'

Photos by Rick Wilking/Associated Press

Kimmie Cornell, left, and Brittney Pastine sign the coffin of Rachel Joy Scott on Saturday at Trinity Christian Center. Mourners stood in line to sign the coffin of the Columbine High School shooting victim.

By Lisa Levitt Ryckman
News Staff Writer

Rachel Joy Scott. Her middle name said it all.

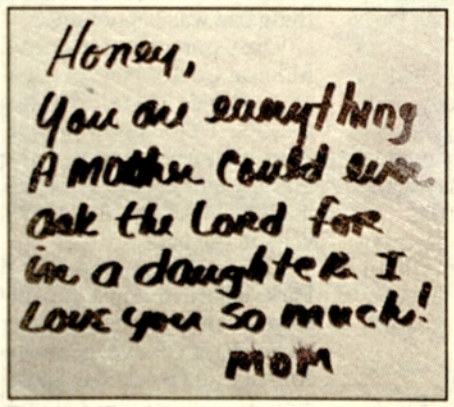
Saturday, nearly 2,500 people came to praise her and to bury her in an ivory casket covered with the scrawled names and wishes of her friends and classmates. They arrived early at Trinity Christian Center and stood in line to sign it.

While *My Heart Will Go On* played in the background, hundreds of mourners celebrated the life of a 17-year-old who seemed lighted from within, who reached out to those who didn't quite fit in, who sometimes wondered how to fit in herself.

Rachel came into her own on the stage or in front of a camera. Family photos compiled into a video for the service showed her as she was: laughing baby, toddler sleeping in her high chair, young beauty in a long gown.

She was an actor, a clown, a girl who wore sunglasses to the prom and once stuffed 24 marshmallows into her cheeks to win a "Chubby Bunny" contest.

Her parents had expected a boy on Aug. 5, 1981, and had picked out the name Craig. That name later went to her brother.



Rachel Scott's mother left this note on her coffin Saturday.

In the end, it was Rachel's fervent desire to please other people that put her in the line of fire.

"She occasionally smoked. And I was on her back, all the time," said classmate Nick Baumgart, who took Rachel to the prom last Saturday. "Finally, she promised me she would quit before she went to prom. She did it for me."

Tuesday, Rachel wasn't outside in the student "smokers' pit" where she used to hang out during fifth hour. Instead, she was in the line of fire.

Rachel had a passion for theater, for speech and the arts. She had just performed in the Columbine school play, *Smoke in the Eyes,* and she was writing a play to perform in senior year.

Her love of drama was rivaled only by her love of God, her friends said. She thought about graduating early to travel with a Christian drama team and become a missionary or work with troubled youths.

"When she came into my class, she was going through some difficult family times. But you wouldn't know that at all," said Vlinda Childs, who supervised the Christian scouting program that Rachel joined in sixth grade.

"Because she shined. She shined for God at all times. She made a choice to love life."

And she loved people. A friend remembered how Rachel enthusiastically offered to trade Halloween costumes with him when they were in fourth grade after he told her he felt humiliated by his homemade Zorro outfit.

"Life was just like one big amusement park to Rachel," he said.

Rachel spent spring break in Albuquerque with her friend Alisha Basore, shopping for things for the apartment they planned to rent together in August.

"She saved me in so many ways," Alisha said. "She taught me the value of life. She taught me to love every second you have."

Death of young has especially painful sting

By Tillie Fong
News Staff Writer

Most had one request.

They wanted to say goodbye. They wanted to see their child one more time.

"For many of the parents, this becomes more real to them," said John Horan, president of Horan & McConaty, which is handling services for eight victims of the Columbine High School shooting in the coming days.

"There is a visceral need to see, believe, and accept."

It's a natural reaction, especially when death is sudden and inexplicable, he said.

"They're coming to us in a state of shock," Horan said. "Most of the people don't know what to expect, what questions to ask, particularly when a death is out of the natural order.

"We expect the death of our parents, we accept the death of our spouse, but we reject the death of our child."

It's been difficult for staff members, he said.

"We have stood beside parents as they have viewed the damaged bodies of their beloved children," he said. "We have held them as they have screamed and sobbed."

A number of parents have left flowers, photographs and small mementos to be buried with their children.

Many took home foam boards to create photo montages, which will be displayed during visitations and services.

"Virtually every parent is bringing some personal memento, things that represent their child's life," Horan said.

The calls to Horan & McConaty started coming in the day after the shooting, and final arrangements were not completed until Friday.

Olinger Mortuary, whose Chapel Hill office is handling three services, including that of slain teacher Dave Sanders, reached out to the community to help with their preparations.

Olinger employees gathered hundreds of signatures in condolence books at the community vigil at the Civic Center Greek Ampitheatre and passed out red roses to participants.

"One of the most helpful things we've seen is to have people show their support for the families and the students," said Derringer Martinez, an Olinger manager.

The signatures will be part of a memorial that will be presented to the families and the students at Columbine High School.

Blake Howe, director of Howe Mortuary in Longmont, had the sad duty to help his personal friends say goodbye to their daughter, Lauren Townsend.

"It's been a very difficult situation," he said.

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

'Help is on the way'

Mundane gave way to madness with report of gunfire at Columbine

Aaron Hancey was running late. Football, choir, scouting, schoolwork. Always on the move. Tuesday promised to be another hectic day.

George Kochaniec Jr./News Staff Photographer

Rescue workers transport a wounded student Tuesday. Hundreds of police, firefighters and paramedics responded to the shootings.

By Lisa Levitt Ryckman and Mike Anton
News Staff Writers

At the crack of dawn, five hours before the terror began, Eric Harris went bowling.

Harris hated jocks, but he was an enthusiastic bowler. When he and his friend Dylan Klebold scored a strike, they'd congratulate themselves with a stiff-arm salute and a "Heil Hitler!"

Harris showed up for Columbine High School's weekly bowling class on Tuesday at 6:15 a.m.

He wasn't acting strange or anything," remembered classmate Jessica Rosecrans. "He was wearing regular clothes. He was wearing flannel."

No black. No trench coat.

Harris was saving that for later.

This was no drive-by shooting

Aaron Hancey was running late. The clock said 6:20 a.m. and he was due at choir practice in half an hour. He grabbed a slice of bread and a gulp of orange juice and was out the door.

Hancey was an overachiever at a school full of them. Football, choir, scouting, schoolwork, shooting video of games for the basketball team. Always on the move.

Tuesday promised to be another hectic day.

First singing, then math, then history and German and language arts and then back to choir.

Except this day Hancey skipped choir. He had a concert in the afternoon and would have to miss chemistry. So he headed to the science lab to get his work in.

"It would have been safer if I had been in the choir room," Hancey said.

It was a small thing on a day almost too huge to comprehend, a day made up of so many tiny details. A day when the mundane gave way to murder.

Littleton firefighter Monte Fleming remembered that he and partner John Aylward were sitting down to an early lunch at Station 11. Left-over ribs and macaroni and cheese.

The call came: shots fired at Columbine. Given the location, Fleming figured it was a drive-by among students. Could be something, could be nothing.

"Most of them are pretty piss-poor shots," said Fleming, a 35-year-old ex-Army medic. "We didn't realize then what was going on."

Fleming and Aylward jumped in their truck. Bowles west to Pierce, then south. As they came up on Clement Park, next to the school, Fleming noticed dozens of students running.

After drive-bys, kids usually hang around to gawk.

This was no drive-by, he thought.

Troy Laman and Robert Montoya were in their truck listening at 11:30 a.m. to increasingly heavy traffic on the police scanner.

"We heard some stuff going down," Montoya said. "We had an idea something bad was happening."

The paramedics for Denver Health Medical Center had seen it all. Gunshot wounds, car wrecks, heart attacks, overdoses. Montoya, Los Angeles born and bred, had spent half his 35 years in emergency rooms, six in Denver. After L.A., Denver was a walk in the park.

Laman, 32, grew up near Winter Park, where multiple gunshot wounds were no more common than palm trees. After college, he moved to Los Angeles and worked in sports medicine. He got to know paramedics, heard their stories, became fascinated by their work. He joined up six years ago.

As different as these two were, they shared a calm peculiar to people who cope with other people's emergencies day after day.

"My wife calls me a stone," Montoya said. "Nothing affects me. I just suppress things. You've got to be able to not get emotionally attached to one certain patient. The next patient could be worse."

It was 11:45 a.m. when the call came: Columbine High School. Then they knew the situation was serious, very serious. Denver paramedics almost never crossed into the suburbs.

"We have too much to do in our own city," Montoya said.

Chris Colwell's shift as attending physician in Denver Health's emergency room didn't start until 3 p.m., but the day began the way Tuesdays always did — at 7 a.m.

First came a staff meeting, followed by the morbidity and mortality conference, followed by a lecture, followed by an education meeting, followed by lunch.

By 3 p.m., Colwell would be in the ER handling the cases that rolled in all night, every night. The day before, he had tended a man shot in the chest, a woman who had stopped breathing, a man who had suffered a massive heart attack and a woman giving birth — all in about 15 minutes.

It was a rhythm Colwell had grown accustomed to, one he was born to as the son of a doctor and a nurse.

He had been in the ER for seven years, and he had seen life at its worst. Someone stabbed to death. A man who hanged himself. A woman whose husband had doused her with fuel and set her on fire.

Those were the worst things Chris Colwell had ever seen.

Until Tuesday.

A lucky cigarette break

Brooks Brown needed a smoke. The lanky member of the Columbine

See **HELP** on **5AA**

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

The Boy Scout first aid manual offered no training for gunshot wounds

Hal Stoelzle/News Staff Photographer

A Littleton Fire Department rescue truck parks close to the high school Tuesday as paramedics and police deploy shortly after first calls came in.

Brooks Brown needed a smoke. The lanky member of the debate team stepped outside the school about 11:15 a.m. to grab a cigarette. It might have saved his life.

HELP from **4AA**

debate team stepped outside the school about 11:15 a.m. Tuesday to grab a cigarette.

It might have saved his life.

As he stood outside a door that leads to the cafeteria, Eric Harris came up the walk. Gone was the flannel shirt, replaced by the long, black trench coat.

"Brooks, I like you," Harris said as he passed and pushed his way into the school. "Get out of here. Go home."

Brown took a drag. He didn't know what to think.

Suddenly, a gunman appeared

It was a stupefying cacophony of sight and sound.

Shotguns roaring. Bullets pinging off lockers. Glass shattering. People screaming, crying, squeezing through doorways, stumbling over each other, literally running out of their shoes. Smoke from the bombs mixing with water from the sprinklers. The fire alarm shrieking a warning that was now too late.

Dave Sanders had already helped clear the cafeteria of most of its students. Now, the 47-year-old business teacher, girls basketball coach, father of three, ran to the second floor, outside the science labs, looking for more students.

He stood in the hallway, herding students toward the door. Suddenly, a gunman wearing a black trench coat appeared and shot Sanders once in each shoulder.

He went down, then got up and stumbled through a door and into a biology class. He collapsed, hitting the ground hard, leaving teeth where he landed.

Aaron Hancey was in a lab down the hall, crouched in a corner of the room.

Jessica Tefft/Special to the News

Littleton firefighters Monte Fleming (left) and John Aylward were sitting down to lunch when the call came. Within minutes, they faced gunfire.

He had been mixing chemicals when he looked out a window and saw students running. Then he saw smoke.

Then he heard the shotguns.

"I could feel it through the walls," Hancey said. "With each one, I could feel the walls move."

Kent Friesen, a science teacher, came in.

"Who knows first aid?" he said.

Hancey stepped forward.

"Come with me," Friesen said.

He looked out the door, up and down the hall, seeing if the way was clear. They sprinted across, then through another door. Inside were about 30 people behind overturned tables. Dave Sanders was bleeding on the floor.

Hancey knelt and checked Sanders' breathing. Fine. He looked at his wounds. In from the front, out the back. He felt his skin. Warm. He touched his right shoulder. Broken.

He and the other guys in the room pulled off their shirts, rolled them into a ball and put them under Sanders' head. They covered him with wool blankets that are kept in all the science rooms.

Hancey reached in Sanders' pocket and pulled out his wallet. He held up a photo.

"Is this your wife?"

"Yes."

"What's your wife's name?"

"Linda."

Hancey didn't want Sanders going into shock, so he kept the questions coming: What's your name? What do you teach? Are you the basketball coach?

"Hang in there. You can do it," Hancey told Sanders.

For the next 3½ hours, as the fire alarm and class bell wailed non-stop, Hancey and classmate Kevin Starkey took turns applying pressure on the bullet holes, hoping to stem Sanders' bleeding.

This was way beyond the Boy Scout first aid manual. "You're trained to deal with broken arms, broken limbs, cuts and scrapes. Stuff you get on a camping trip," Hancey said. "You never train for gunshot wounds."

Yet here he was, rolling Sanders from side to side on the tile floor, keeping him awake and off his back so he wouldn't choke on his own blood, pressing the heels of his hands to the wounds.

"I need help," Sanders said. "I've got to get out of here."

"Help is on the way," Hancey told him.

As the hours passed, Sanders' skin took on a bluish tone. He became cold to the touch. His breathing slowed. And he continued to bleed.

"I'm not going to make it," he said. "Tell my girls I love them."

Early on, Hancey called home from a phone in the classroom. His dad and a police dispatcher on a third line kept them informed about what was going on.

Sometime after 2 p.m., word came that a SWAT team was six classrooms away.

It took the officers an hour to reach them.

The first black-clad officer who burst into the room told the group to put their hands on their heads and follow them.

"Someone's got to stay with Mr. Sanders," came a voice from the crowd.

"I will," Hancey said.

No, a second officer said. Hancey had to go.

"I felt like I could leave it with

See **HELP** on **6AA**

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

The barrage sounded like a howitzer during the 40-foot sprint to the ambulance

Dave Sanders had already helped clear the cafeteria. Suddenly a gunman wearing a black trench coat appeared and shot him once in each shoulder. He went down.

HELP from **5AA**

them," he said. "That he'd be fine."

They were led down the stairs and out the door to safety.

Hancey walked down the street to the public library and into the bathroom. He was shoeless and shirtless and had Dave Sanders' blood all over his hands.

Hancey scrubbed them, but it didn't do any good.

His hands still didn't feel clean.

Horrific game of peek-a-boo

"All the jocks stand up!" one of the shooters said. "We're going to kill every single one of you!"

They walked through the library, asking the kids why they should live, laughing and hooting as they shot them. If someone quivered or yelled after the first volley, they'd shoot them again.

"Peek-a-boo!" one of them said to a student hiding under a table. And then came the blast of a gun.

"Do you believe in God?" one asked Cassie Bernall as he trained his gun on her.

"Yes, I believe in God," she answered.

"Why?" he asked.

He didn't wait for an answer.

'We're getting you out of here'

The southwest side of the school was secure, Monte Fleming was told, and he ought to get over there fast. Four or five victims were down on the ground.

It was at that point that Fleming knew things were going to be bad.

He had seen bad before. Mangled bodies in traffic accidents. Failed suicides that left people alive but with half their heads gone. Bags filled with body parts after United Flight 585 slammed nose-first into the ground outside Colorado Springs.

But nothing like this.

When Fleming got to the southwest corner, there was a phalanx of police, their guns trained on the windows of the second-floor library.

"This isn't as secure as we'd like it to be," Fleming told his partner John Aylward. "Let's get 'em and let's get the hell out of here."

They got the truck as close as they could to the building. Aylward jumped out and made a bee-line to a girl who had been shot in the chest. He picked up Anne Marie Hochhalter and ran with her back to the truck.

Fleming ran toward the school, under the library. He kept down and as close to the building as he could, inching his way along the brick looking for victims.

He found one, a boy.

Fleming ran to him. His skin was blotchy and cold. No pulse.

Ten feet to the right, Fleming saw another boy, face down.

He ran to Lance Kirklin and turned him over. A shotgun blast had ripped open the left half of his face.

"Help," Kirklin said.

Just then, Fleming heard glass shatter. Gunshots rained down from the library.

He hoisted Kirklin, 200 pounds if he weighed an ounce, and cradled him to his chest.

"We're getting you out of here," Fleming told him.

Kirklin was quiet. There were no tears in his eyes.

Fleming ran under a police barrage that sounded like a howitzer going off, a 40-foot sprint to a waiting ambulance.

It went like that all day and into the night. Loading the injured into ambulances. Driving them to a hospital. Coming back for more.

About 9 p.m., Fleming and Aylward were finally relieved. They drove back to Station 11. They were drained and covered with blood.

Their lunch of left-over ribs and macaroni and cheese, now nine hours old, was waiting for them on the table.

They sat down and ate.

Steven R. Nickerson/News Staff Photographer

Robert Montoya (left) pins a ribbon of Columbine High School colors on his partner Troy Laman. The Denver Health Medical Center paramedics were the first into the grisly library.

He had drawn his last breath

It was a collision of circumstance that put Troy Laman on the southwest side of Columbine at the exact moment they needed a paramedic to go inside.

Because by 3 p.m., the scene was swarming with paramedics, 100 or more. It could have been anyone.

They didn't know how many injured were still in the building, and numbers were flying everywhere. The math was mind-numbing. More than 1,900 kids. Hundreds pouring out. Hundreds more unaccounted for.

Laman and his partner, Robert Montoya, worked triage, checking out the kids the police brought out. Quick questions: Are you hurt? Can you walk? Then on to the next, and the next.

Everybody had to be in place, ready, waiting. Just in case.

Laman and Montoya moved to another triage station, but when they got there, they were told to keep going, to head to the southwest side of the building.

The hot zone. Alive with weapons and SWAT.

And then one Denver SWAT officer grabbed Laman. It was somebody he knew, a friend.

"Troy, I need you to go in," he said. "Let's go."

So Laman went in, through the shot-up cafeteria with its three inches of standing water, up the stairs, into a science classroom. Dave Sanders was there, where Aaron Hancey had left him. And it looked to Laman as if he had just drawn his last breath.

But the paramedic was there to do triage, not treatment. To find out what was going on, to determine the number of patients and their injuries, and to call for the right help.

In triage, a person who can't breathe on his own is considered dead. It's important to move on, to go past that person and find someone who can be saved.

The good of the many over the good of the few.

But at that moment, it didn't matter. Because Laman couldn't leave the room. The building simply wasn't secure yet.

So he stayed there, helpless. For 10 minutes, 15 minutes, Laman really wasn't sure how long it was. All he knew was that it felt like an eternity.

"As paramedics, our job is to put our hands on people and take care of them," Laman said. "I knew there was nothing I could do for this guy. But because I was stuck in a room with him by myself for 15 minutes, I wanted to help him.

"I had nowhere else to go. I couldn't leave the room. I wanted to do something for him."

Finally, a SWAT officer gave the all-clear. Over the radio, Montoya urged him to go on to the other victims, to find somebody to save.

"There's nothing you can do," he told Laman. "There's nothing you can do."

And so Laman left Dave Sanders, who was already dead, and went looking for someone who was still alive.

Echoes of screams and gunfire

The library looked like people had left in a hurry, Chris Colwell thought.

He had left triage outside to come in and certify death. And all he saw at first were signs of high school life.

"It looked almost as if there were all these kids studying, and they had to leave because of a fire drill," the emergency room doctor said. "And they had to leave everything as it was."

And then he saw the floor.

See **HELP** on **7AA**

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

Ammunition clips littered the room where no one was supposed to raise a voice

Lisa Kreutz was lying on her side and her face was hidden from view. The paramedic moved to her head and bent down. Gently, carefully, he rolled her over.

Steven R. Nickerson/News Staff Photographer

Dr. Christopher Colwell sits in the emergency room of Denver Health Medical Center. His routine day was shattered when he was called in to declare the dead.

HELP from 6AA

A carpet of glass from a bank of blasted windows. Ammunition clips, used and dropped. And bodies: 12 of them, dead for hours. Echoes of screams and gunfire in a room where no one was even supposed to raise a voice.

It was as if a neutron bomb had detonated in the room. No haphazard path of destruction. Just bodies riddled with wounds, alongside the unscathed vestiges of a typical school day.

From behind a counter, Colwell could see tabletops and bookshelves untouched. Books open, waiting to be read. A college application, half-done. A "to do" list. An open calculus book with unfinished homework problems.

Humming computers the only sound.

One boy was shot as he worked at his computer. When Colwell saw him, he lay crumpled beside his chair. His computer remained on, untouched, running Windows 95.

One victim still clutched a pencil. Others died as they crouched under tables, desperate to escape the bullets.

But there had been no escape. Colwell read that in the wounds, most of which had killed instantly.

"I would say if you had an entire medical team of paramedics standing on top of these people the moment it happened, there still very likely would have been nothing you could have done to save them," he said.

Harris and Klebold lay on the floor, not far from their victims, dead of self-inflicted wounds. Save for their trench coats, the guns lying beside them, and the bombs strapped to their bodies, they were indistinguishable from the students they had terrorized and executed.

"Eventually, in the emergency department, you get used to seeing dead bodies and dealing with death," Colwell said. "But I don't think you ever get used to dealing with dead children."

He pronounced them all dead at 4:45 p.m. The 15 bodies remained behind until Wednesday, but Colwell took their images with him, enduring visions of violence.

Earlier, Troy Laman saw the same scene, but he took away a different memory.

A memory of coming into the library, before anyone else, and tiptoeing through the carnage.

Be careful, the SWAT team had told him. Don't touch anything you don't need to. Don't move anything unless you have to. Stay away from their backpacks. There were bombs everywhere, they said.

So Laman moved gingerly. He was there to do triage, so it was his job to assess everyone's condition. He had to make sure they were dead.

"If I couldn't get a look at somebody, at their face, to see if they were still alive, I tried to kind of touch them," Laman said.

The first body he came to was a girl, and he could see she was gone. So he moved to the next, another girl.

She was lying on her side, and her face was hidden from view. And because Laman couldn't see her face, he reached down to touch her.

That touch told him he needed to see her face.

Laman moved to her head and bent down. Gently, carefully, he rolled her over.

Her eyes were wide open.

And she was crying.

Postscript

Lisa Kreutz, 18, the last person brought out alive from the library, underwent surgery to reconstruct her shoulder. She was listed in serious condition Saturday.

Aaron Hancey, who kept Dave Sanders alive for 3½ hours, wishes he could've done more.

"I feel like I could've carried him out on my back."

The day after the massacre, paramedic Robert Montoya was back at work.

He had one call: an 82-year-old man with an aneurysm. The man died in the operating room.

Firefighter Monte Fleming went to Wednesday's vigil in Clement Park. Despite the huge crowd, he was uneasy. "I didn't feel safe," he said.

Dr. Chris Colwell went home Tuesday, downed a beer and called it a day. "I can't imagine something worse than this," he said.

"I hope this is the worst thing I ever see."

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

Moment by moment at Columbine High School

TUESDAY, APRIL 20

11:10 a.m.: Students at Columbine High head to the cafeteria for lunch, hit the books in the library or begin walking to their classrooms for fifth period.

11:21 a.m.: Jefferson County's communication center receives a report of an explosion near West Coal Mine Road and South Wadsworth Avenue, about a mile from the school. A pipe bomb had exploded against a fence, setting it on fire. Police now believe it was a diversion. West Metro and Littleton firefighters and a squad car respond.

At the school, student Brooks Brown runs into Eric Harris on the grounds outside Columbine. Harris tells him to go home.

Harris and Dylan Klebold, wearing masks and black trench coats, walk toward the parking lot from the soccer field. They are armed with two sawed-off shotguns, a 9 mm semi-automatic rifle, a TEC-9 semi-automatic machine pistol and homemade pipe bombs.

When they reach the southwest parking lot outside the school, they start firing. One of them throws a pipe bomb onto the roof. It explodes. A student is shot in the back trying to flee. Two students die outside the school. The gunmen throw another pipe bomb into the parking lot before entering the school through the student entrance.

11:25 a.m.: A school custodian tells Jefferson County Deputy Neil Gardner, stationed at Columbine, that something has exploded in the parking lot.

11:26 a.m.: A dispatcher fields the first 911 call from the school. The caller, a student, says there is an injured student lying in the parking lot. In the next 20 minutes, more than eighty 911 callers report shots and explosions at the school. One call comes from the library, where teacher Patricia Nielson tells students to get down under the desks and tables and screams at the dispatcher that she sees one gunman just before the line goes dead.

11:27 a.m.: The school's fire alarm goes off.

Deputy Gardner rushes toward the sound of explosions and exchanges fire with one of the gumen in the parking lot. Gardner retreats and calls for help on his radio.

Teacher Dave Sanders enters the cafeteria and yells for everyone to leave. Students and cafeteria workers flee as the gunmen enter, spraying the room with bullets and exploding another bomb. Student Matthew Depew leads 15 students and adults into an office off the cafeteria. They barricade the doors, call a Denver police officer from a phone in the office, and for the next two hours they lie on the floor. The gunmen approach and attack the room four separate times, at one point blowing a hole through the door. None in the room are injured.

Some students and workers lock themselves in a nearby bathroom and teachers' lounge. One of the gun-

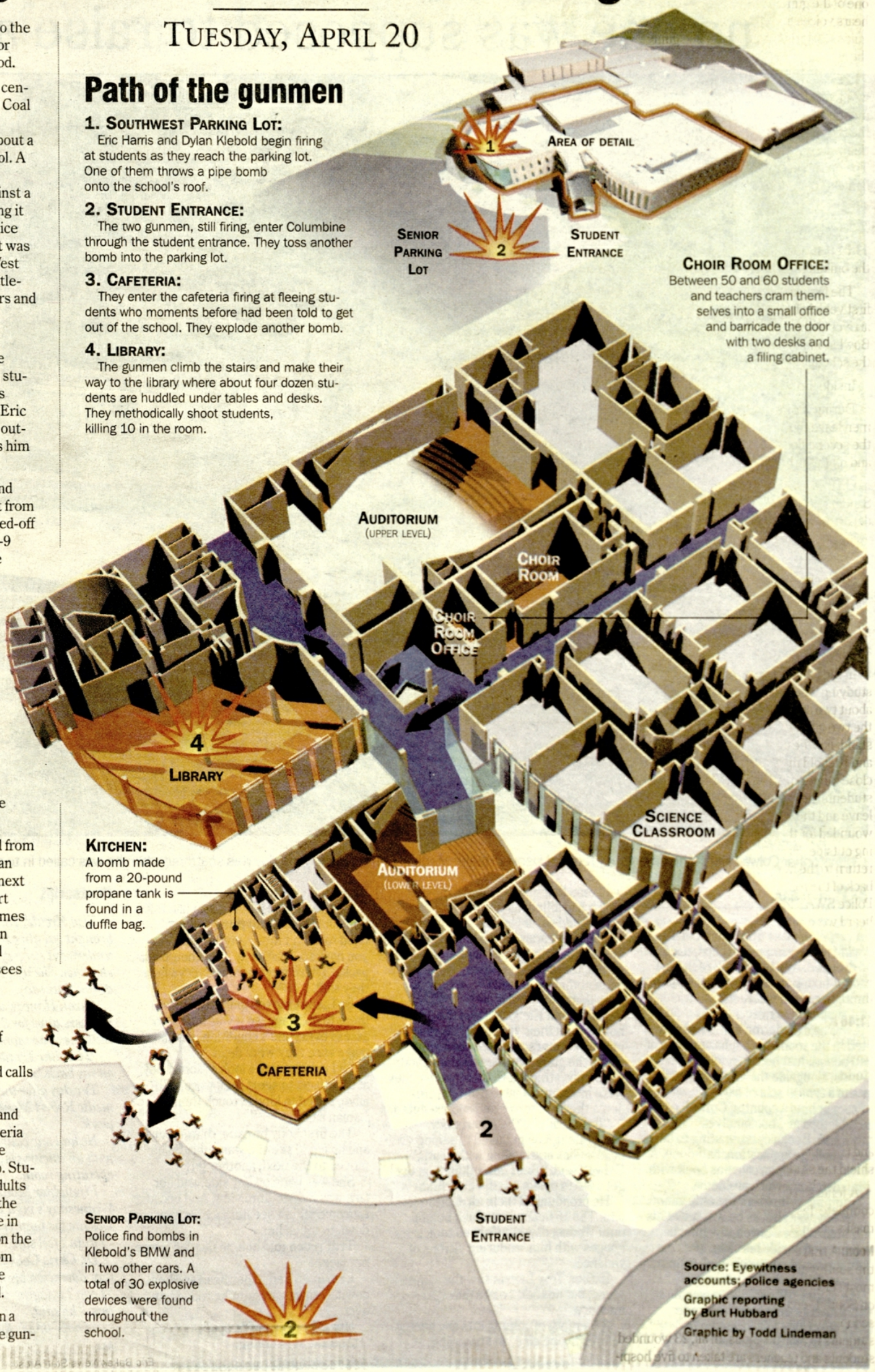
Path of the gunmen

1. SOUTHWEST PARKING LOT:
Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold begin firing at students as they reach the parking lot. One of them throws a pipe bomb onto the school's roof.

2. STUDENT ENTRANCE:
The two gunmen, still firing, enter Columbine through the student entrance. They toss another bomb into the parking lot.

3. CAFETERIA:
They enter the cafeteria firing at fleeing students who moments before had been told to get out of the school. They explode another bomb.

4. LIBRARY:
The gunmen climb the stairs and make their way to the library where about four dozen students are huddled under tables and desks. They methodically shoot students, killing 10 in the room.


1
AREA OF DETAIL
SENIOR PARKING LOT
2
STUDENT ENTRANCE
CHOIR ROOM OFFICE: Between 50 and 60 students and teachers cram themselves into a small office and barricade the door with two desks and a filing cabinet.
AUDITORIUM (UPPER LEVEL)
CHOIR ROOM
CHOIR ROOM OFFICE
4
LIBRARY
SCIENCE CLASSROOM
KITCHEN: A bomb made from a 20-pound propane tank is found in a duffle bag.
AUDITORIUM (LOWER LEVEL)
3
CAFETERIA
2
STUDENT ENTRANCE
SENIOR PARKING LOT: Police find bombs in Klebold's BMW and in two other cars. A total of 30 explosive devices were found throughout the school.
2

Source: Eyewitness accounts; police agencies

Graphic reporting by Burt Hubbard

Graphic by Todd Lindeman

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

men bangs on the bathroom door, yelling "We know you're in there."

Columbine principal Frank DeAngelis sees one of the gunman firing into the cafeteria. He hears voices from the nearby locker room and guides 30 girls to safety after the gunmen leave the area.

11:29 a.m.: The first police car pulls up, driven by a Jefferson County sheriff's deputy, who meets Gardner. In the next several minutes, the two are joined by officers from Denver, Littleton and Arapahoe County sheriffs offices. The officers begin transporting wounded students to safe locations.

11:30 a.m.: An officer reports someone shot and down in the parking lot.

11:31 a.m.: Officers report smoke coming from the building.

The first call for paramedics goes out. The first vehicle from Littleton Fire Department arrives within minutes and is told to wait at Bowles and Pierce until it is safe to continue to the school.

Inside the school, smoke fills the hallway.

During the next 30 minutes, the two gunmen leave the cafeteria firing. They climb to the second floor, then fire at fleeing students and roam the halls before entering the library.

On the second floor, where they shoot Sanders, they rattle doorknobs in the science department. Inside one room, about 25 students huddle around Sanders, who is bleeding in the chest from bullet wounds. He later dies.

In the choir room, next to the auditorium on the second floor, between 50 and 60 students and teachers cram themselves into a small office and barricade the door with two desks and a filing cabinet.

In the library, about four dozen students are studying when a teacher runs in, screaming about two students with guns. Moments later, the two gunmen enter and ask all "jocks" to stand. For the next 10 to 20 minutes, Harris and Klebold methodically shoot students at close range as they huddle under tables. Ten students die in the library. The two gunmen leave and the two dozen survivors help the wounded for the next 40 minutes before escaping outside. Harris and Klebold eventually return to the library and kill themselves in the back of the room. A member of the Denver Police SWAT team said later the last shots he heard were at about noon.

11:38 a.m.: Jefferson County sheriff activates the Colorado Law Enforcement Emergency Radio network, asking for assistance from throughout the metro area.

11:46 a.m.: Ten police officers put together a makeshift SWAT team, and using a fire truck as cover, enter the school. They begin evacuating students and faculty. They see bombs scattered on the floor. One explodes.

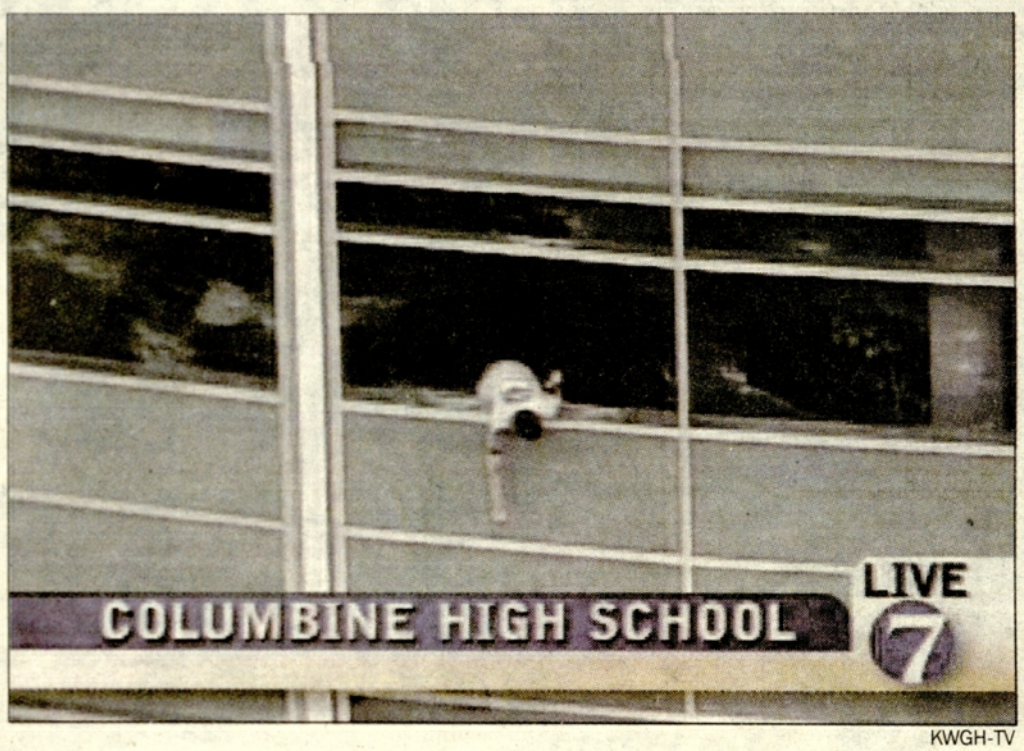
Students flee the school, some huddling behind cars, others running to nearby homes and Clement Park. Police use their cars to shield the students.

A Jefferson County sheriff's deputy airs a complete description of the suspects wearing masks and trench coats.

Noon: A triage unit for the injured is set up on the southwest side of the school to treat the most serious cases. Another unit is assembled on South Pierce Street on the east side of the school. Ambulances begin rushing wounded students to area hospitals. In all, 23 wounded students and teachers are taken to five hospitals.

Hal Stoelzle/News Staff Photographer

A group of freed students and faculty run from the school.



KWGH-TV

Patrick Ireland, 17, slides head-first through the second-story window of the library and is lowered by two Lakewood SWAT officers on an armored truck.

Between 300 and 500 officers eventually surround the school.

Frantic parents start gathering at Leawood Elementary School and the Columbine Public Library.

12:15 p.m.: A second makeshift SWAT team enters the school . Minutes earlier, they exchanged gunfire with Klebold and Harris while rescuing a wounded student and retrieving a body.

12:30 p.m.: Parents gather on a grassy hill north of the school, trying to find out something about their children.

12:48 p.m.: Parents standing outside Columbine are told by police to go to Leawood to await word from their children.

1 p.m.: A third SWAT team enters the school and begins a room-by-room search. In all, SWAT teams from Jefferson and Arapahoe counties, Lakewood, Denver and the FBI searched the school.

Armored cars and fire trucks arrive and are used as barriers to get students out.

1:11 p.m.: James, a student, calls KUSA-TV, Channel 9, from a second-floor classroom using a cellular telephone. He reports hearing gunfire and people running up and down the hall.

Between 1 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.: Patrick Ireland, 17, bleeding, with his arm limp by his side, slides head-first through the second-story window of the library and is caught by two Lakewood SWAT officers standing on the roof of an armored truck.

1:25 p.m.: The Jefferson County School District announces that all schools in the southeast corner of the county are locked down.

1:30 p.m.: About 15-20 people run out of the school under police protection. Officers escort them behind an armored car where they are frisked.

1:45 p.m.: Police take into custody three males, dressed in black jackets, walking across Clement Park toward the school. The three are friends of the two suspects.

2:45 p.m.: A Denver police officer standing outside the choir room office announces he has come to help the students and teachers inside. He tells them to leave in groups of 10.

4 p.m.: Jefferson County Sheriff John Stone stands outside the school and tells reporters that up to 25 people died at Columbine and that the attack was some kind of suicide mission. Wednesday morning, authorities revise the death total to 15, including the two gunmen, who died of self-inflicted gunshot wounds.

4:30 p.m.: SWAT teams initially declare the school safe.

4:45 p.m.: Dr. Chris Colwell, a Denver Health emergency room doctor, pronounces dead the last of the 12 people who died in the library.

Late afternooon: Police conduct searches at the Harris home near the school and the Klebold home in Deer Creek Canyon. They find explosives at the Harris home.

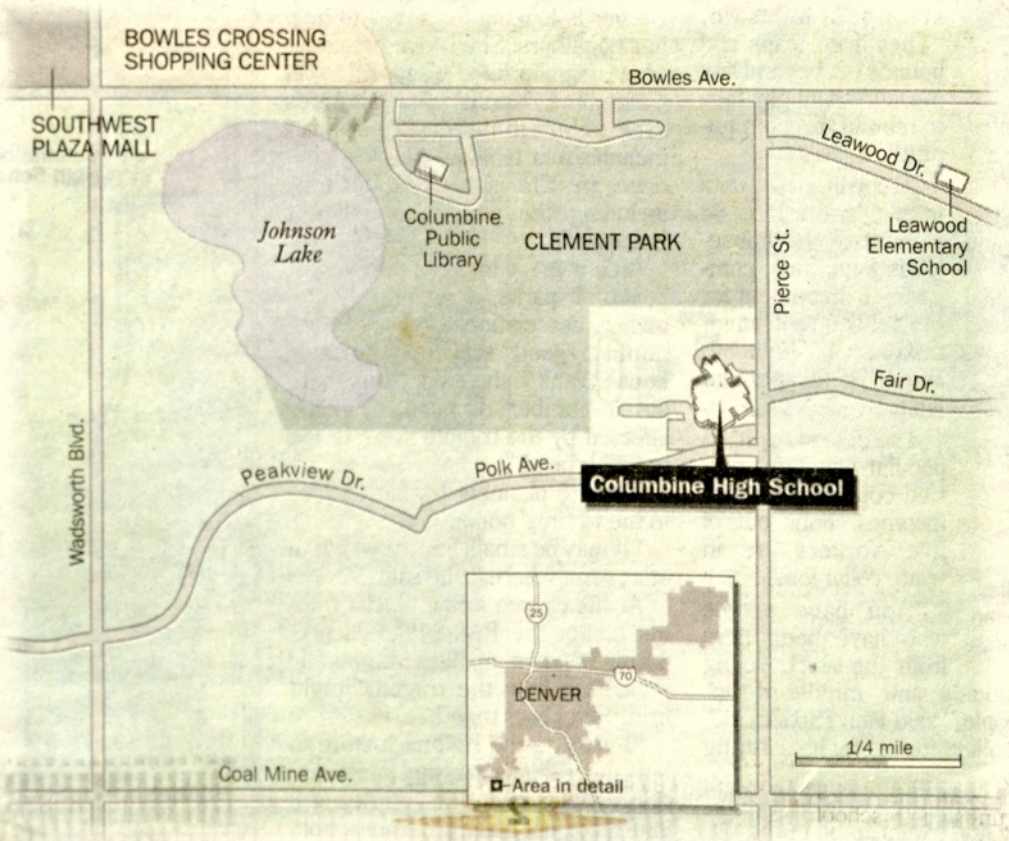
6:15 p.m.: Police find bombs inside Klebold's BMW parked in the school's southwest parking lot. They cordon off the lot after finding bombs in two other cars. They evacuate residents from 14 nearby homes and then blow the windows out of one of the cars to disarm the bomb.

Throughout the evening, police continue to comb the school, while bomb units inspect explosives found inside and outside the school.

Bomb squads deactivate several bombs found on and near the two dead gunmen.

10:15 p.m.: Another pipe bomb in the parking lot explodes.

Bomb squad technicians and investigators spend the night combing through the school and the surrounding grounds. They find 30 explosive devices.



Eric Baker/News Staff Artist

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

Families came to area for peace

Assault on children was an assault on the heart of community

By M.E. Sprengelmeyer
News Staff Writer

This young community is growing up fast.

In some neighborhoods near Columbine High School, the thin trees in front yards are not mature enough for a child to climb. But since the pastel-colored homes started spreading in the late 1970s, the community has been built with children in mind.

Trails wind down grassy swaths, connecting back yards to playgrounds at a series of sprawling parks. Speed bumps keep the streets slow and safe.

Young parents came here to give their children a sanctuary from the city. They might not know all their neighbors like in more established communities, but the adults mingle at soccer games, talk while pushing strollers down the trails or meet at school conferences.

Now, residents say, an attack on the children was an attack on the heart of the community.

"It's really an infant community," said the Rev. Joel Miller of Columbine Unitarian Universalist Church. "Its strongest ties have been around children . . . That's the one thing that kept us from being a bedroom community."

On Tuesday afternoon, Miller found himself in a schoolhouse, comforting the young witnesses to murder and parents still frantic to find their children.

The way Miller sees it, adults played a role in the tragedy because they haven't been setting a good enough example about how to get along.

"If we're going to honor our children," he said inside his church Friday, "we know we have to make better neighbors with one another."

Columbine High School draws from a 10-square-mile area in the hills west of Littleton. Two-story houses started creeping into the area in the mid-1970s and crews are still building on the open field behind Ryan Johnson's childhood home.

"When I was growing up here, there were open fields and we'd ride our dirt bikes there," said Johnson, 27, pointing to construction behind the house on Weaver Avenue.

The suburban homes have kept coming, and so have commercial developments that now ring the pocket of homes. What has stayed the same, he said, is that it's still a neighborhood for kids.

Dennis Schroeder/News Staff Photographer

Mourners bring gifts and mementos to a memorial in Clement Park on Wednesday. The park, which borders Columbine High School, is in the heart of a neighborhood built with children in mind. The community has been devastated by the killings.

> *"It's really an infant community. Its strongest ties have been around children. . . . That's the one thing that kept us from being a bedroom community."*
>
> **— The Rev. Joel Miller,** Columbine Unitarian Universalist Church

Johnson ticks off the houses where the families have kids. "There are 13-to-17-year-olds all over," and that means house after house is filled with grief," he said.

"The people around here are strong," he said. "They'll go leaps and bounds . . . beyond any measure it might take to rebuild this community."

According to data from Claritas Inc., 44 percent of the households have kids, compared to 35 percent for the six-county Denver metro area. The population is 98 percent white.

The data show it's a popular place for married couples with two incomes. Four out of five workers are in white collar jobs.

"You have people who have been here from the start, young professionals and middle-of-the-road people," said Paul Patricca, 53, a controller for a manufacturing company.

"They don't want to be in the city, yet they don't want to be out in the middle of nowhere," Patricca said.

He says people come for the location, the attractive parks, the quiet streets and, yes, the schools.

"It's quiet," he said, adding, "not as quiet as it used to be."

Like a lot of area residents, Annie Berger is looking for a way to help her neighbors. She's vice president of a neighborhood association in Columbine Knolls South/Estates area. Her membership roster includes four families who lost children in the school shootings, including the parents of suspect Eric Harris.

"It's a great location. We've got beautiful parks, a strong homeowners association, a sense of community, good schools and nice house plans," she said. "But there are a number of people directly affected by the tragedy here in the neighborhood."

They're planning to plant a tree in the victims' honor.

"It may be small, but we've got to start somewhere," she said.

At his church a few blocks from his home, the Rev. Miller is preparing his own small memorial and pondering how the tragedy might bring neighbors together.

"I went to the Hallmark store to buy the ribbons for my congregation," Miller said. "The clerk and I, instead of just making a transaction, we shook hands and talked."

Columbine High School area profile

	Columbine	Metro
1998 population	29,848	2,189,483
White population	98%	91%
Population under 18	27%	26%
Households with children	44%	35%
Median age	38	35
Median household income	$76,495	$47,187
Median home value	$165,277	$130,153
College degree	42%	31%
2-worker households	73%	66%
White-collar workers	80%	68%
Owner-occupied households	86%	63%
Average residency	7.7 years	7.6 years
Homes built since 1970	85%	60%

Source: Claritas Inc.

News Staff

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

Shrine of MEMORIES

At Columbine High, impromptu memorial gives expression to community's grief

By Tina Griego
News Staff Writer

At Columbine High School, the memorial grows.

Bouquets and stuffed animals lie in mounds. The snow has been trampled into brown mush by hundreds who have come because they don't know what else to do or where else to go. And on the memorial wall, the ink of written prayers has run together in an incomprehensible wail.

Hundreds of thousands of words have been written about these deaths. None are adequate. Nothing can prepare the people who come here for the sucker punch of grief. For the finality that greets them.

"I can't change anything. I can't do anything for them," a weeping woman who never knew the dead children says. "There is nothing I can say."

Some come here because they know what lies ahead for the families of these children. They know what it's like to walk into their child's room and find nothing but silence. They know what it is to scoop pajamas from the floor, to bury their faces in the folds of cotton, to breathe deep.

To say that Kelly Fleming loved to write poetry cannot begin to convey the sudden beauty of her bashful smile. To say that Dan Rohrbough was a good son, that Steve Curnow loved *Star Wars* and that Cassie Bernall loved God cannot capture the sweetness of their laughter or the realization they will never again hug their parents and know that, in that place and for that moment, they are safe. In the collection of facts, in the black-and-white yearbook photos are only glimpses of the adults they never had a chance to become.

Someone named Matthew Phillips wrote a long poem about the students and the teacher who died trying to save them. He mounted it on Day-Glo orange paper and carefully sealed it in plastic. It lies at the foot of the memorial wall.

"They dance across your memories," he wrote. "They leave footprints in your thoughts."

And they always will.

CASSIE BERNALL

'The most beautiful blue-eyed ... angel in heaven'

Cassie Bernall, right, with friend Kristal Mallookis, during a trip with their youth group.

Class: junior
Age: 17

She will forever be remembered as the girl who died for her faith, the one who looked her killer in the eye and said, "Yes, I believe in God."

She never said another word.

In the days that have followed her death, dozens of young Christians have taken strength from Cassie's strength.

Her parents, also devout Christians, say they, too, believe that God had a purpose in taking Cassie from them.

"We are proud of her, and we will painfully miss her," Brad Bernall said in a statement. "She was truly our little buddy."

A few years ago, Cassie might not have been able to answer "yes" to the killer's question. She was fascinated by witchcraft, involved "in the dark side of things," her friend Crystal Woodman said.

"Then she started getting into church and then her whole life was God and Jesus," she said. "She was amazing."

Her friends remember her long blond hair, how beautiful she looked in her favorite blue shirt with the flowers across the front, the cloth bracelet she wore with the letters "WWJD" — What Would Jesus Do?

"God spoke to her mom and told her she was so glad she was with him in heaven," Crystal said. "She is just smiling, and she's so happy.

"I want you to write this, I want you to say that Cassie is the most beautiful blue-eyed, blond-haired angel in heaven."

— Tina Griego

STEVEN CURNOW

'Star Wars' fans plan ticket tribute for one of their own

Class: freshman
Age: 14

The only thing they know about Steven is that he was a *Star Wars* fan, but that's enough.

Steven's death has prompted *Star Wars* fans across the country to try to do something in his memory. On one Internet bulletin board, fans are planning to buy an extra ticket to *Episode I: The Phantom Menace* in Steven's name and give it to someone standing in line.

"May the Force be with Steven," one person wrote. "May God be there to comfort him and his parents."

Steven wasn't even old enough to drive, but he was looking forward to the day he would fly.

He loved all things airborne, from *Star Wars* to Stealth fighters.

He loved Luke Skywalker and Han Solo. He was collecting *Star Wars* books. He couldn't wait until the new *Star Wars* movie came out so he could memorize it just like the others.

He wanted to become a Navy pilot — F-14s were his bird of choice. He also loved a good game of soccer. He had played the game since he was 5 and had developed a kick so powerful he could send his opponents sprawling with the speeding ball.

He had just become a soccer referee to learn the game a little better and pocket some spending money.

"Steve was a delight to know," his family said in a statement. "He was so good with younger children. He had a smile that touched everyone who knew him. It's hard to imagine life without him in it."

— Tina Griego

Steven Robert Curnow posed for a picture recently with sister Nancy. *Star Wars* fans plan a tribute to the 14-year-old Columbine High freshman.

COREY DEPOOTER

'He was not one to step back from confrontation'

Class: junior
Age: 17

Corey would have made a good Marine. When the two gunmen entered the library and opened fire, he never panicked. His family and friends believe he died trying to shield someone else from gunfire.

"He was brave," his father, Neal, said. "Even for that age. Sometimes kids are foolishly brave, but he was not one to step back from confrontation."

Corey DePooter showed off his catch from a recent fishing excursion.

Neal DePooter thinks his son was happy the day he died. For months, Corey had worked part time at a golf course, saving his money to buy his first car, a Mustang. He even had one picked out from the classified ads.

"The day he died was the day we were going to get the loan," Neal DePooter said.

Corey was not a shy kid. He liked to talk; he loved adventure. He and his best friend traveled all the way to Oklahoma to fish. Bass fishing was his latest passion. He was hoping to talk his grandfather into buying a boat so the two of them could go fishing.

He also liked to hunt and golf. He worked at the Raccoon Creek Golf Course, operating the mower and raking bunkers.

"He's left an awful big hole in our lives," his father said. "But we have come to the conclusion that since he lived a big life, he had no regrets. He lived life to its fullest."

— Tina Griego

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

KELLY FLEMING

'Angel on Earth' had just begun writing her life story

Class: sophomore
Age: 16

Kelly was working on her autobiography. She had started with her birth and had gotten to age 5.

Then, two gunmen felled her, creating a tragic postscript to her life story.

A 16-year-old sophomore, Kelly loved to write poems and short stories.

Her parents said she often shared her work with them and dreamed of getting something published.

They have saved it all on her home computer.

She still speaks to them in the words she so carefully crafted.

Writing was more than a passion for Kelly, it was a way for a shy girl to express herself.

She was especially close to her math teacher, Jud Blatchford, who will be a pallbearer at her funeral today.

"She was one of the kindest students I've ever had," Blatchford said.

A shrine to Kelly at her vigil revealed parts of her personality. There was a rainbow Beanie Baby, a small baby doll, a large teddy bear with a red stocking cap and scarf, and a video of the movie *Titanic.*

Kelly yearned to own a car, and every dime she earned went into her car fund. She couldn't wait to take road trips across the country. A yellow Corvette would have been the ideal wheels, but she liked Mustangs, too.

Kelly Fleming, a 16-year-old sophomore, loved to write poems and short stories and was working on her autobiography.

Her uncle, Ray Fleming, recalled that Kelly's wants were simple. On his last visit with her, he asked whether she wanted to go skiing or to Coors Field or to a Broncos game.

The zoo would be perfect, she said. They had a wonderful time.

Kelly is survived by her parents, Don and DeeDee Fleming, and her 18-year-old sister, Erin. Her mother described her as an "angel on Earth."

She was a sweet Irish girl with an innocent heart.

Her family and friends send her into the next life with the famous Irish blessing that begins: "May the road rise to greet you. May the wind be always at your back."

— Katie Kerwin McCrimmon

MATT KECHTER

A big guy with big goals who 'always had a smile'

Straight-A student Matt Kechter was a reserve lineman on the Columbine High School team who had his eye on a starting spot.

Class: sophomore
Age: 16

Matt was a big guy with big goals. He was a junior varsity lineman on the Columbine football team but had his eye on the varsity spot. He was a straight-A student who was studying in the library the last day of his life.

He worked hard, studied hard, played hard.

"He always had a smile," one of his football teammates said at a memorial vigil Friday.

During a team photo session, the coach asked all the players to put on their "mean game faces."

Matt couldn't.

"He tried," the teammate said. "He loved to smile."

Football coach Andy Lowry called Matt "the neatest kid in the world."

"He wasn't the type of kid that would come out and say things, but his actions brought out the best in people.

"Maybe God had a plan. He only took the kids that could handle it, the great kids."

At the vigil, one of his family members said she had told Matt she loved him on the morning of the day he died.

"And he answered back, 'I love you, too.'

"I knew that he always loved me, but I was really shocked. He doesn't say, 'I love you,' except on holidays and on my birthday. And now he's gone."

— Tina Griegoand Tillie Fong

DAN MAUSER

'Sweet and gentle' student lived by Ten Commandments

Daniel Mauser, 15, was a straight-A student who wasn't afraid to hug his parents and raked leaves for a neighbor who'd had a heart attack.

Class: sophomore
Age: 15

What kind of kid was Daniel? At St. Francis of Cabrini Catholic Church, there's a picture of him posing with four trophies. Nearby lies a spelling-bee certificate, an award from the Golden Piano Studio for composition, a certificate for the National Science Olympiad, his favorite Nintendo games.

He was the kind of kid who wasn't afraid to hug his parents, who earned straight A's in the past two quarters of school, who was just as comfortable with a microscope as he was on skis.

The kind of kid who told his parents he was worried about the growing number of guns in the country.

"He was very pure in his heart," said his mother, Linda.

Daniel grew up in a tree-lined neighborhood where he played soccer with the other kids on the block.

"I had a heart attack a few years ago, and he used to come down and help me," neighbor Ken Greenlaw said. "He used to come and rake the leaves because he knew I couldn't."

His fourth-grade religious-education teacher, Diane Rakowski, said Daniel knew the Ten Commandments and lived by them.

She said that her daughter was in Daniel's class and that she prayed her daughter would find someone like "sweet and gentle" Daniel.

"What I wanted for my daughter was a Daniel Mauser," Rakowski said.

— Tina Griego

DAN ROHRBOUGH

'There are so many things he wanted to do with his life'

Class: freshman
Age: 15

Dan was a typical teen-ager.

He wasn't in any hurry to give his mother his school photos.

They had been taken in the fall. For months, Sue Petrone asked her only son whether she could see the pictures.

For months, Dan forgot to bring them home from his school locker.

Until Tuesday.

Before Dan left for school that morning, he pulled the pictures from his backpack.

Now that school portrait is the centerpiece of a heartbreaking shrine to a boy who died as a freshman in high school.

Dan was just 15.

Even so, he had already become a genius with electronics. Every day after school, he worked with his dad, Brian Rohrbough, at his shop, Excalibur Sound.

Dan could design a magnificent home theater, and he couldn't wait to get a car someday so he could install a fabulous car stereo.

"He just turned 15 on March 2. I'm so sad that he'll never drive," Sue Petrone said. "There are so many things that he wanted to do with his life."

After graduating from Columbine High School, Dan hoped to work full time with his dad.

A quiet, happy kid, Dan had a wry sense of humor.

He wore shorts in winter. He and his buddies played street hockey until their sticks broke, battled one another in Nintendo games for hours and overdosed on Orange Julius drinks while they pretended to do their homework. Every summer he visited his grandparents at their Kansas farm.

Dan Rohrbough, who turned 15 last month, helped in his father's sound business.

Dan was probably one of the first victims. He was walking outside to have lunch in the park when the gunmen headed in. They shot Dan in the back as he tried to run away.

His death was the most public. As helicopters hovered overhead, he lay crumpled on the pavement.

"I just wanted to go pick him up and hug him and say, 'You did nothing to deserve this,' " Petrone said.

Now she can only pray for Dan and all the other families experiencing such anguish.

"I'm just focusing on the love that I have for my son," she said. "Love conquers evil."

— Katie Kerwin McCrimmon

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

RACHEL SCOTT

'She was never, ever afraid of being her own person'

Alisha Basore, right, keeps this picture of her and Rachel Scott in her photo album. It was taken in January in the school cafeteria.

Class: junior
Age: 17

Rachel was the one in the funny hat.

She wore hats with gusto, a reflection of her dramatic streak and her zest for life.

No shrinking violet, Rachel.

The diminutive 17-year-old felt equally at home at a speech meet or a Christian youth group, center stage or reaching out to someone who lacked the confidence she always had.

"She had this fun, full-of-life side of her," said a youth pastor at her church, Trinity Christian. "She was never, ever afraid of being her own person."

The voice-mail message on her family phone was pure Rachel.

"You have reached the home of Queen Rachel and her servants," says the girl who called herself the "people's princess."

She once offered to pay her sister's boyfriend $25 if he would hurry up and marry her sister so Rachel could have her room.

Photos show a girl with laughing eyes and a sly smile. Music, dance, poetry and photography were among her many passions.

She was the kind of person you could confide in about anything without fear of judgment, her brothers and sisters say. Her younger brother, Craig, escaped the library uninjured and then prayed for Rachel.

"She was a joy to be around," said her friend, Alexis Bentley, 15. "She was incredible — her outlook on life, her charm, her love for God."

Among Rachel's dreams: to become a missionary or a youth counselor; to help kids in trouble; to spread God's word.

"She will be speaking to more people in her death," said her father, Darrell Scott, "than she ever would have alive."

— Lisa Levitt Ryckman

ISAIAH SHOELS

'He was probably the coolest guy in the school'

Class: senior
Age: 18

On the bus, "everyone would want to sit with Isaiah because he made people laugh," sophomore Brian Zimpfer says. "He always said something funny."

For a little guy, Isaiah was hard to miss.

He was the one who always said "hi" when you passed him in the halls, who seemed to bounce when he walked, whose 4-foot-11-inch frame brimmed with life.

He died asking for his mother.

Isaiah would have graduated this year. He wanted to attend the Colorado Institute of Art and become a music executive like his father, Michael. He was quick to make fun of his own height and quick to prove that his height would never hold him back. He lifted weights. His friends say he was one of the strongest guys in school, always trying to lift people right off their feet.

Just about everybody liked him.

"He was probably the coolest guy in the school," sophomore Brian Zimpfer said.

"He rode the bus with me every morning, and everyone would want to sit with Isaiah because he made people laugh. He always said something funny."

Isaiah was one of the few black students at Columbine High School. His killer cornered him in the library, said they didn't like blacks, then shot him.

That Isaiah was killed because he was black haunts Michael Shoels. He moved his family to Denver 23 years ago to keep them from experiencing the same racism he experienced growing up in Texas.

What killed Isaiah? Hate, Michael Shoels says.

Hate killed a boy everyone loved.

— Tina Griego

JOHN TOMLIN

'Fun-loving guy' had driving ambition, sense of humor

Class: sophomore
Age: 16

These are the things John loved: baseball caps and Bible study; Chevy trucks and four-wheeling; driving through the mud.

He was a rarity among teenagers, a 16-year-old kid who enjoyed being a 16-year-old kid.

"He was high on life," said the Rev. Boyd Evans, the youth pastor at Riverside Baptist Church South, where John was a regular at the youth program.

His memorial service was held Friday. He will be buried in Wisconsin next week.

"He was a fun-loving guy," Evans said. "He enjoyed driving his truck in the mud. That excited him. But John was pretty quiet. He had the good-old-boy veneer, but he was a teddy bear inside."

He was a jokester with a big wide grin. A hard worker. A kid who could not be swayed once he set his mind to something.

"Part of the reason he started working as early as he did at 14 was to save up enough money for a four-wheel-drive Chevy pickup," said Wayne Anderson, owner of Arapahoe Acres nursery, where big, burly John helped haul trees and load bags of soil.

Last year, John traveled to Juarez, Mexico, where he helped build houses for the poor.

He planned to join the Army when he graduated.

His father, John, called him the perfect son.

"He was just good," he said. "You'd ask him to wash one car and he'd wash both."

— Tina Griego

John Tomlin started working at 14 with hopes of saving up for a pickup truck. He traveled to Mexico to help build houses for the poor and planned to join the Army.

LAUREN TOWNSEND

Animal lover dreamed of becoming a wildlife biologist

Class: senior
Age: 18

She was the beauty with brains, a girl who could spike a volleyball one minute and quote Shakespeare the next.

Lauren was a senior a step away from college when she was killed. And while she helped tend to cats and dogs at a local animal shelter, her real dream was to work with the big animals as a wildlife biologist.

She was the baby of her family, with two older brothers and an older sister.

"I'll remember her as a beautiful soul," said Catherine Beck, sister-in-law of Lauren's stepfather, Bruce Beck. "And her beautiful smile, and her intelligence."

Lauren was a college recruiter's dream. Captain of the volleyball team, winner of President Clinton's Excellence in Education award, member of the National Honor Society. Her friends say she was well on her way to becoming valedictorian of the school.

Her English teacher, Carol Samson, called her a "thin, beautiful girl with a delicate beauty."

"Last Saturday night, my husband and I chaperoned a dance," Samson recalled. "From out of this maze came a beautiful girl in a light brown dress to greet us.

"Then she disappeared into the crowd. That memory will stay with me forever."

— Tina Griego

Lauren Townsend before the high school prom April 17.

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

KYLE VELASQUEZ

Boy towered over parents and embraced them with love

Class: sophomore
Age: 16

Kyle was a gentle giant.

At nearly 6 feet tall, he towered over his mom, dad and brother and loved them with a heart as big as he was tall.

Just before he left home Tuesday morning, he told his mom what he always told her: "I love you, Mom."

Then he left forever.

A ruthless spray of gunfire killed the 16-year-old sophomore while he was in the school library, working on the computer during his lunch break.

Now Kyle's parents, Phyllis and Al Velasquez, and his large, loving, extended family are left with broken hearts and mementos of Kyle.

There's the picture of him when he was just 5 with a boyish John Elway. There are the photos of Kyle's grandparents that he always kept in his room. After they died, Kyle told his mom he "needed" their pictures. Then he found small gold frames that didn't quite fit and mounted the photos his way.

There's also the message board, where he left his final note to his dad and signed it in his sweet fashion: "Love, Kyle, XOXOXO."

Kyle didn't hang out with friends much. He idolized his big brother, Daniel, 21. And now that Daniel had moved out, he was always with his folks.

"We traveled in threes," Al Velasquez said, tears rushing down his face as he realized anew that his threesome is no longer complete.

Kyle was so thoughtful that when his dad was busy working the swing shift at Coors, he would tape all the sports events his dad was missing.

Kyle Velasquez, a sophomore, enjoyed spending time with his parents and his 21-year-old brother, Daniel.

"If I liked something, he liked it," Al Velasquez said.

Every evening, he would keep his mother company.

"He's always been kind and gentle and loving. This child had more hugs than any child I've ever known," Phyllis Velasquez said.

Kyle loved his teachers and his cats and his Aunt Rose's homemade tortillas. He dreamed of someday being a firefighter or a pilot in the U.S. Navy, in which his father served.

Now, every time a jet flies overhead or a firetruck races by or a Broncos game is on, the Velasquez family will be thinking of Kyle.

— Katie Kerwin McCrimmon

DAVE SANDERS

25-year business teacher, coach was 'something special'

Columbine business teacher Dave Sanders posed with his wife, Linda, in a Christmas Eve photo. Sanders was a 25-year veteran of Columbine.

Business teacher, girls basketball, softball
Age: 47

All Dave Sanders ever wanted to do was teach.

That's what he did from the moment he walked into Columbine 25 years ago to the moment he rushed from the faculty lounge yelling for students to run from the gunmen who hunted them. He continued warning students even as he was shot, shooing them from the cafeteria before stumbling into a nearby room.

Sanders died on a classroom floor, surrounded by the students he loved, gazing at a picture of the family he adored.

Sanders spent more than half his life at Columbine, teaching there his entire career. If he wasn't in the classrooom, he was on the court. If he wasn't on the court, he was on the field.

"That was something special," former Columbine principal Gerry Difford said. "Most people burn out and say they can't do it anymore. Dave never did."

Sanders had three daughters, 10 grandchildren and had been married to his wife, Linda, for eight years.

"Linda's birthday is today," said Sanders' nephew, Rich Jarman. "He told her not to make any plans, because he was planning something special.

"They used to tell us on many occasions that when they first saw each other, they knew that was it. They just seemed to glow around each other. It really gave you hope.

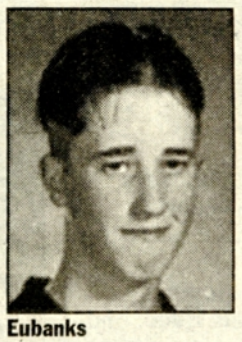
"If he wasn't with his wife and kids, he was with the kids at high school. That was his life, and he enjoyed it."

— Tina Griego

INJURED

Anderson

Doyle


Eubanks

Foss

Graves

Hall

Hochhalter

Ireland

Jankowski

Kintgen

Kirklin

Kreutz

Kyler

Nielson

Park

Schnurr

Richard Castaldo, 17, who was hospitalized with five gunshot wounds in the chest, back and arm, was upgraded to fair condition Saturday.

Though he's paralyzed from the chest down, his doctors and family are optimistic that he'll walk again. He underwent surgery last week.

Two other victims showed improvement Saturday.

Mark Taylor, 16, was upgraded to fair condition with gunshot wounds in the chest, arms and leg. A **15-year-old boy**, who has not been identified, was upgraded to serious condition at St. Anthony Hospital Central.

Eight other students remained hospitalized Saturday from injuries suffered in Tuesday's shooting at Columbine High School:

Denver Health Medical Center

- **Lance Kirklin,** 16, critical but stable condition with multiple gunshot wounds; intensive care.
- **Lisa Kreutz,** 18, serious condition with multiple gunshot wounds.
- **Jeanna Park,** 18, fair condition with gunshot wounds in lower extremities.

Swedish Medical Center

- **Valeen Schnurr,** 18, fair condition with nine shrapnel and bullet wounds in the chest, abdomen and arm; may be released within a few days.
- **Anne Marie Hochhalter,** 17, serious condition with gunshot wounds in chest and liver.
- **Sean Graves,** 15, fair condition with a gunshot wound in the back and three in the abdomen.

St. Anthony Hospital Central

- **Kasey Ruegsegger,** 17, serious condition with gunshot wounds.
- **Patrick Ireland,** 17, serious condition with gunshot wounds.

Eight students who were shot have been released from hospitals. They are:

- Jennifer Doyle, 17
- Makai Hall, 16
- Dan Steepleton, 17
- Mark Kintgen, 17
- Nicole Nowlen, 16
- Stephen Austin Eubanks, 17
- Stephanie Munson, 17
- Brian Anderson, 17

Four people who suffered other injuries have been released:

- Nick Foss, 18, treated for injuries in a 15-foot fall.
- Adam Kyler, 16, treated for abdominal pain.
- Patricia Nielson, 35, teacher, treated for a chest wound.
- Joyce Jankowski, 45, teacher, treated for anxiety.

Steepleton

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

Kids need spiritual nourishment

Religious leaders offer insights into what led Columbine killers astray

By Jean Torkelson
News Religion Writer

The Columbine tragedy has startled the nation into examining a culture in which teens go on murderous rampages.

What do spiritual people say about the causes? The solutions? Following are insights by seven religious leaders.

Steven R. Nickerson/News Staff Photographer

Father Ken Leone offers comfort and kind words to Katie Trojan, 15, before a Tuesday evening ecumenical service at St. Frances Cabrini Parish, 6673 W. Chatfield Ave., after the killings at Columbine High School.

Bishop Alan Bjornberg, spiritual leader of 90,000 Lutherans in the Rocky Mountain Synod:

Bjornberg

"I look at these things systematically. This is not two isolated young people committing this atrocity; this is the whole community in some way allowing, or engendering, these things.

"There is too much accessibility to weapons. And perhaps our culture engenders such stress among all of us that some of our young people simply can't handle it.

"There's undoubtedly a culture of violence — in movies, books, the Internet — this is the culture these young people have tapped into. One of the big conversations of our time is about free speech, but every speech has consequences. We have to have some conversation about that.

"We have to talk about what kind of responsibilities go along with our freedoms. I'm not looking to blame anybody at this point. What we need to do is ask our questions."

Lark Matis-Ruffner, minister of religious education at Jefferson Unitarian Universalist Church :

Matis-Ruffner

"Those two young men (who did the shooting) were born with all the dignity God gave us, like a bright, shining light inside. We call this the heart space. Somewhere along the line, their hearts became armored, closed off.

"I've had kids say to me, 'Lark, I can relate to what these two did; I've felt lonely, been so mad I felt like killing the popular kids.

" 'But I don't know how to get guns or make a pipe bomb. Besides, if I ever did, my parents would be so disappointed in me.'

"So we (parents) are to blame for the availability (of weaponry). We must take the blame for not reaching out to our children, to say, 'I'm worried about you, help me understand you. Talk to me.'

"In our faith we don't have inherent evil, only inherent goodness. That goodness will come again if you (approach) kids with a loving heart. They really will respond."

Rabbi Yehuda Fine, expert in youth and violence from New York City, in Evergreen for a national conference on alternative schools:

"We fool ourselves into blaming a disjointed society. We've lost sight of how to communicate meaningfully with our children.

"Let's face it, society isn't going to change dramatically enough to make the headlines disappear. What we *can* change dramatically is our relationship with our kids.

"Parents need to know they don't have to be experts in anything; they just need to share and care. This truly helps kids.

"The media and society has to be careful not to get caught up in symptoms. Kids don't become violent because they watch violent TV programs, or go to 'hate' sites on the Internet.

"We can't wait five, 10 years to thrash out these policy decisions, go running around looking at all the ills of society. We need to focus on what's happening to children and family systems.

"Every parent needs to be engaged and spiritually nourish their children. Where are they going to learn how to face adversity in life? Right now the coin is always flipped to their peers.

"I back away from the word *morality* because it doesn't mean much to adolescent kids. How you live your life, how you reflect the exalted and truth of who you are — that's what you have to talk to kids about.

"Like (the massacres) in Jonesboro and Paducah, these (teens) were not accepted by the world around them. They don't like themselves. They're very isolated."

Jake Samour, Archdiocese of Denver youth minister:

Samour

"Starting in the 1960s, there was a movement to be skeptical of everything. Whatever feels good for you is OK.

"Now what I see in some teens is even worse — indifference. They don't care about anything, including right and wrong, whether it's moral or immoral. There's no hope in them.

"I believe we have to get kids to church, to Mass, get them to know Jesus. Once kids know there's objective truth and morals they start to see that what they do *does* have an impact on other people's lives — they cannot remain indifferent.

"Also, if only somebody could show these kids somebody cared, that changes people's lives. Maybe that was what was lacking in the kids who did this."

Marilyn Hickey, founder and president, Marilyn Hickey Ministries:

Hickey

"The No. 1 thing is violence on television. Our eyes are windows to our heart. Whatever we see, and keep seeing, becomes a picture in our heart. When you think violence, see violence, pretty soon you *do* violence.

"There always used to be boundaries. You aren't free to take poison, to drive off a cliff or kill somebody.

"I think we need to put some strong (limits) on what we allow in music and videos, access to pornography. We need some stringent laws that bring out the best in people and that punishes the worst.

"We've gone to the limit of free expression in this society. Now we should ask ourselves — do we like what we've gotten?"

Reginald Ray, Buddhist, head of religious studies department at Naropa Institute:

"Personal responsibility is a Buddhist thing. Each individual person needs to kind of look at his and her life and see the ways in which we as individuals are contributing to the situation.

"It's a violent culture. The factors that promote violence have to be eliminated. It's a tough question. We live in a free society, we don't want to legislate everything, but how many people have to be killed before something changes?

"Education will probably make people more aware of the tremendously negative effects of violence on young people. If that means less freedom to put anything you want on the TV screen, yeah, that's what it means.

"We have gun control, we should have some violence control. Letting everybody do what they want to do doesn't really work.

"But I don't want this to sound fascist. Buddhists believe, underneath everything, all people are good. If that goodness is not acknowledged, people become evil, their good qualities get covered over by a crust of aggression, hardness and anger.

"So what do you do with those kids who become monsters? Marginalizing these kids doesn't work. They want to be accepted. Somebody has got to show those kids some genuine kindness, not further blame them or punish them."

Mohamed Jodeh, chairman of the Colorado Muslim Society

Jodeh

"The family should go back to God. We should impress on children the values God stated for us in holy scriptures. Not just during Friday, Saturday or Sunday rituals, but by implementing those values in our daily life.

"To love, not hate, to forgive, to be tolerant. The most important is that God in his wisdom created man in diversity. I believe this country represents God's wisdom by its great diversity of people. We have to teach that to our children.

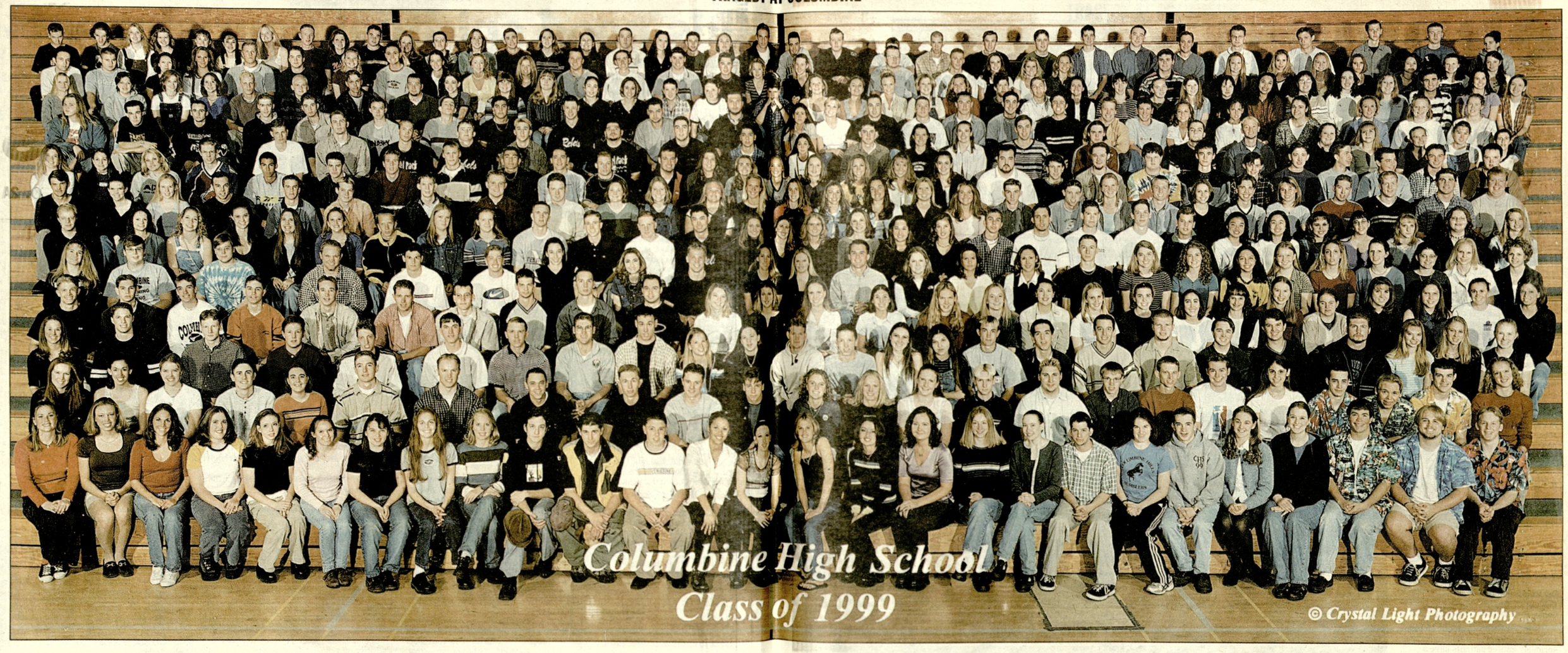
"It's not the job of the school to teach values. That comes in the home — teaching that life is sacrosanct.

"Look at how this country used to be in the 1950s. We have to go back to those values that made this country great. We still have the same scriptures, but we've stopped practicing the values.

"We go to church for social reasons, not because we value church.

"The cornerstone starts with the family. The change goes back to God."

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE



Patrick Davison/News Staff Photographer

"We will not let this act erase the 27 years of excellence that Columbine has represented," principal Frank DeAngelis says.

From the principal

We are Columbine.

It is our rallying cry at assemblies and special events. When our students stand and cheer those words, they give voice to all that we are as a school and a community.

We never expected to have to call these words into play at a time like this, but they have never been more important as our community struggles to deal with the unspeakable tragedy of April 20, 1999. I want to offer my condolences and continued support on behalf of the Columbine family to those who lost loved ones and to those members of our family who are recovering from their wounds.

As I walked in to address almost 800 of our students Thursday at a gathering they had organized, they had just finished chanting those words. They never had more meaning.

We know that Columbine will forever be associated with this horrible memory and these scars will be with us for the rest of our lives.

But we will not let this act erase the 27 years of excellence that Columbine has represented.

Even in the moment of our greatest tragedy, our teachers and students performed heroic acts that saved many more from losing their lives. Dave Sanders, who impacted the lives of so many of our students and athletes as a teacher and coach, gave his own life, walking into the line of fire to steer them to safety. Jon Curtis and Jay Gallatine, two of our custodians, returned several times to rescue students whose lives were in danger.

These are only three heroes of the many who were willing to risk their lives for the well-being of one of their Columbine family members. We also want to express our deepest, heartfelt gratitude to the law enforcement agencies and paramedics who helped save the lives of our students and faculty, the counselors who have aided our community in dealing with its grief and the volunteers who have performed countless acts of support and kindness.

To the Class of '99, we pledge to do everything in our power to make certain your four years of accomplishment are not lost amid this tragic time and to make your last few weeks as Columbine Rebels as rewarding as possible.

Finally, I want to thank the students and faculty for the support and energy they've given me to carry on. You really have been my inspiration. I would be proud to be the father of any of you. We will, together, honor the memory of those who died and forge an even stronger bond with those who survived.

We are Columbine.

Love,
Mr. D

From the Senior Senate

We, the students of Columbine High School, would like to tell the world that we have not, are not, and never will succumb to the hate and violence that has recently dampened the fabric of our school. Our hearts and minds can never forget the recent events, but our souls will always carry the pride and love that we have for CHS. The sores that afflict us will heal through the faith we have in each other.

The entrance of our school will always read, "Through these halls pass the finest students in America," because we believe that our school guides us to become better than we are, and more than we were ever supposed to be. We are stronger than any one person can ever fully realize. Our strength radiates from our teachers and community who believe in us, and because the history of our school has embedded in us the strength of each and every class before.

Each student that has passed through these halls has left a piece of themselves that fortifies the building we call home. This building is not made of brick or stone or mortar but of memories, of love, of pride and no earthly power can take that from us. We cherish the differences we have and the characteristics that define our school. This is who we are. We are Columbine! We are the young adults who will lead the world in the future. We will not go quietly into submission but will fight for what we know is right and for the burden that we carry on our hearts.

The sun still rises to ignite the walls of Columbine High School in all its glory. The grass on our fields of sport still grows beneath the blanket of snow that drapes our state. One day soon, students of Columbine will fill the halls and crowd the classrooms. We will retake our school and build it stronger than anyone could have ever dreamed. The mural that paints the school history is unfinished and when completed will likely span the world over. If one thing holds true in this time of despair, it is that we will survive.

Furthermore, we would like the world to see us as a symbol of hope and not as an example of the regression in society. We are a vision of hope because this community has been magnified tenfold by the love that has inundated our lives from around the world. Each and every gesture, act or thought directed toward us has built an indestructible bond that holds tight to everything that is right and good. We are a vision of hope because of our strength and pride. We are a vision of hope because the same walls that have been built by our school can be built throughout the world.

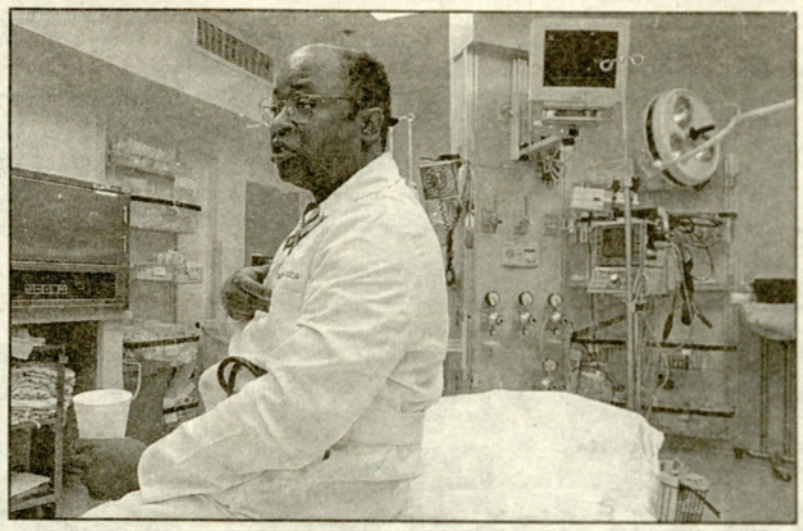
In years to come we would like history books to say that on April 20, 1999, Columbine High School united the world in creating a better place for the future. If we remember this as a tragedy, then we are dishonoring the people who have aided us in our struggle, and taking in vain the lives that were stolen.

Columbine Senior Senate

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

SURVIVAL *measured in minutes*

Victims' chances improved with rapid medical response to life-threatening wounds



LEFT: Trauma surgeon Dr. Phillip Mallory talks about the treatment Columbine gunshot victims required. Mallory's team from Swedish Medical Center had to clamp one victim's aorta to stop bleeding.

By Bartholomew Sullivan and Joe Garner
News Staff Writers

Trauma surgeon Dr. Phillip Mallory and a team from Swedish Medical Center opened a victim's chest in the emergency room, clamped off her aorta to stop massive bleeding from a torn vena cava, a vein that feeds the heart, then searched for the wound that had lacerated her liver.

"Anne Marie was the most unstable," Mallory said, sitting on the trauma-room gurney where the miracle work was performed last week. "She was white as a ghost and barely conscious."

While other doctors, nurses and technicians worked to stabilize Anne Marie Hochhalter, Mallory and three other surgeons prepared for the four hours of surgery that would keep the 17-year-old clinging to life.

Police heroics at Columbine High School were quickly followed up by the medical task of lifesaving that doctors last week described nonchalantly as almost routine.

> *"These kids are resilient. The same injuries to adults could have been fatal."*
>
> **Dr. John Schwappach,** Swedish Medical Center physician

Trauma physician Dr. Christina Katlett of Johns Hopkins University Hospital in Baltimore says seriously injured patients have a "golden hour" to begin receiving treatment for massive trauma. The shootings started at 11:26 a.m. Three of the patients at Swedish, including Anne Marie, arrived with six minutes inside that golden window of opportunity.

Doctors remain circumspect about the chances of complete recovery for some victims. Dr. J. Adair Prall at St. Anthony Hospital Central, who treated Patrick Ireland after he was shot in the forehead and pushed himself out of the library window to safety, said the youth was not bleeding to death when he reached the facility. But Patrick can't understand simple requests, and his language and motor skills have been at least temporarily compromised.

But for doctors who count on seconds, "Time was not quite of the essence in the way it possibly was for the other victims," Prall said of Patrick's case. He had been asked to speculate on whether Patrick could have survived had he not jumped into the waiting arms of SWAT-team members.

Photos by Linda McConnell
News Staff Photographer

ABOVE: Ambulance crews bring a victim of the Columbine shootings to Swedish Medical Center Tuesday. Three patients arrived within the "golden hour" in which chances of survival are highest.

In interviews and press briefings, doctors and nurses said they were prepared for the crisis that engulfed them. Dana Pepper, vice president for clinical operations at Swedish, said the center expected to receive more patients and could have handled them. Because it was closest to the high school, Swedish Medical Center received the first wave.

Two things worked in favor of all hospitals and patients: It was midday on a Tuesday, when the facilities were in full swing and fully staffed, and the mainly healthy victims had youth on their side.

"These kids are resilient. The same injuries to adults could have been fatal," said Dr. John Schwappach, member of a spine-surgery team at Swedish.

Eleven students remained hospitalized Saturday. Most continued to improve, responding to high-tech medical care and the love of family and friends.

Schwappach said the survivors owe their lives to quick response by police and paramedics, although others have criticized law enforcement personnel for slow response.

"It was the front-line people who made all the difference," the surgeon at Swedish said. "The four who came here all had potentially lethal injuries. It was remarkable there weren't more fatalities, and I think it was cool heads by law enforcement that prevented more fatalities."

Mallory says Anne Marie is alert and thanks the heroics of two friends — Kim and Jason, their last names so far unknown — who pulled her to safety after she was shot and paramedics came under fire. She recognized the paramedics when they came to visit her last week, he said.

Clamping off the aorta before surgery was a "setup for a multisystem organ failure," Mallory acknowledged, but it was necessary, and she has responded well. The nick to the vena cava, the huge vein that returns blood from the lower extremities to the heart, was like an open drain before the blood was cut off. The hole had to be sewn closed.

A second wound to Anne Marie's back is evident in X-ray images. The gently rounded bullet rests alarmingly close to one vertebra and may explain what Mallory hopes is only temporary loss of feeling in her legs.

Valeen Schnurr, who took some of the most serious-sounding injuries with multiple shrapnel fragments to the chest, abdomen and left arm, is recovering and may be released this weekend, Mallory said.

The medical teams' fast work began paying off by week's end.

Dr. Thomas L. Wachtel of St. Anthony was evidently pleased to release Makai Hall on Friday afternoon after arthroscopic knee surgery and treatment for shrapnel to the left cheek.

Hall's prognosis is "excellent," although he'll be on crutches for some time, Wachtel said.

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

SCENES *of* SORROW

Rodolfo Gonzalez/News Staff Photographer

Terrified students walk gingerly up a hill behind a wall at Columbine High School Tuesday while police search for the gunmen.

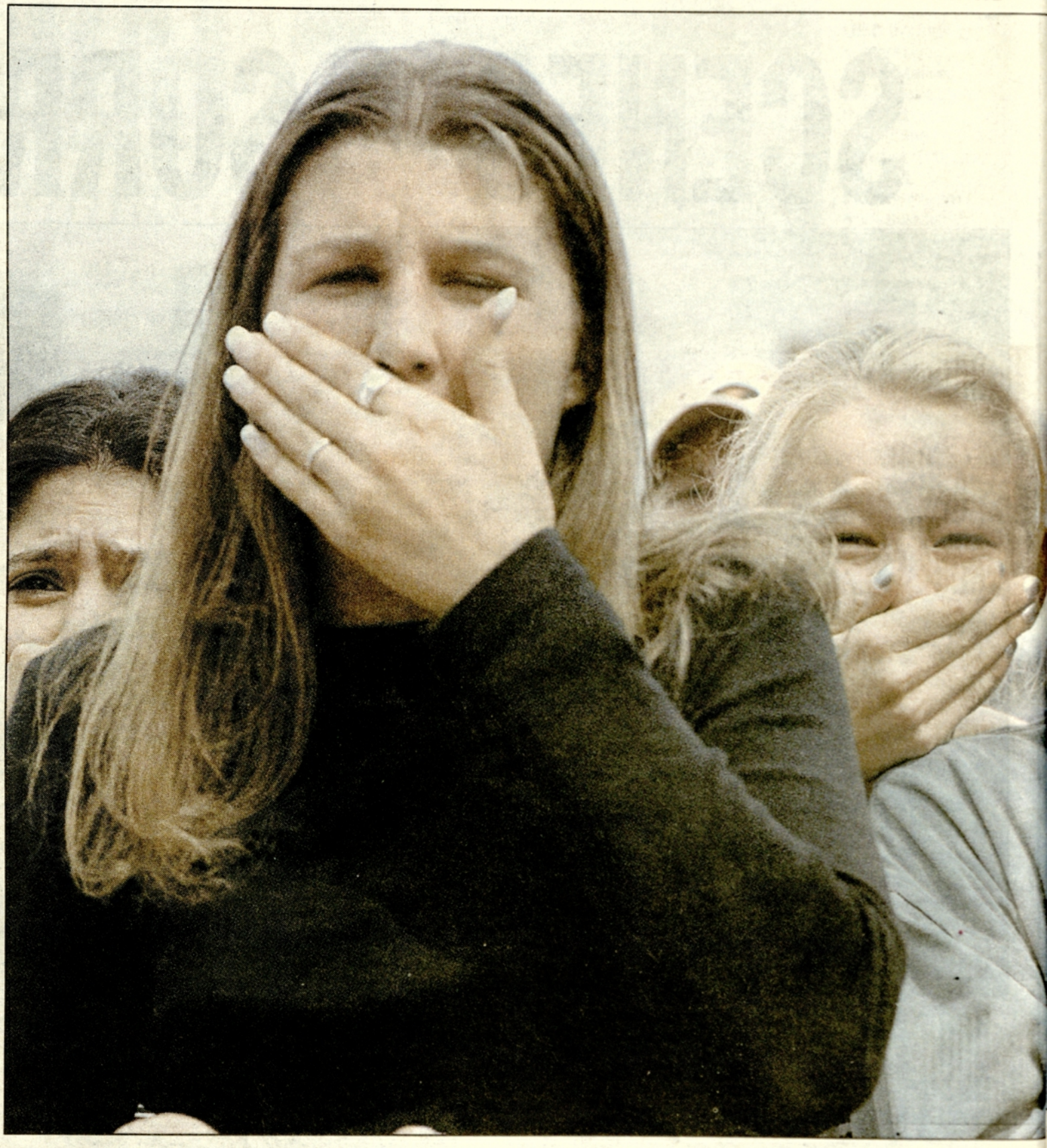
"That's what they did. They killed innocence."

Don Fleming
father of victim Kelly Fleming

Two wounded teens receive comfort and treatment in a triage area near the school.

George Kochaniec Jr./News Staff Photographer

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE



Tears briefly give way to joy as teens watch classmates flee to safety outside the school.

Hal Stoelzle/News Staff Photographer

"I don't want my community to be remembered forever as the place where that terrible tragedy occurred. I want it to be known as a place where we started to change."

Dave Thomas
district attorney

Blood-stained shoes and socks lie in the ambulance drive at St. Anthony Hospital Central Tuesday after the delivery of injured students from Columbine High.

Steven R. Nickerson News Staff Photographer

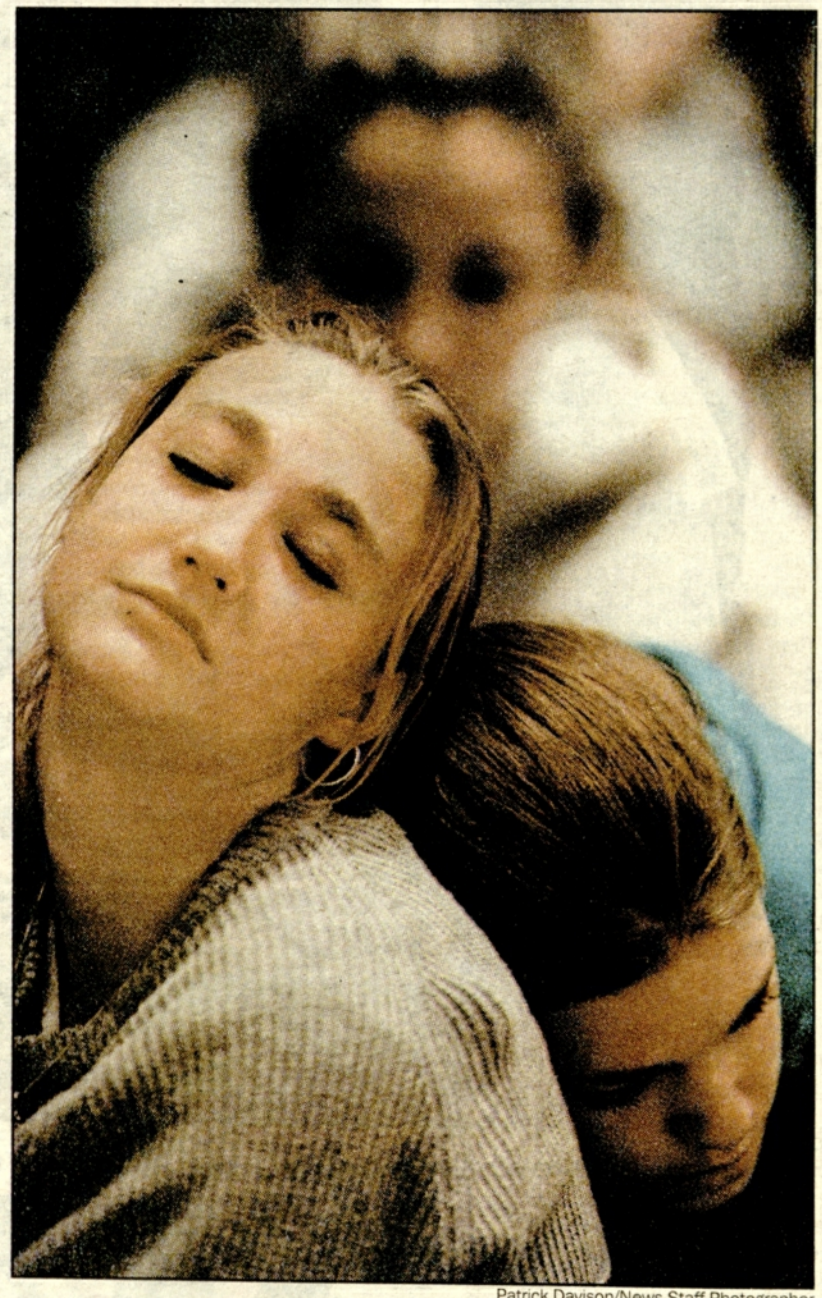
Officers charge toward the school moments after hearing reports of shooting.

Dennis Schroeder/News Staff Photographer

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

"This is the message today: Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

The Rev. Bill Oudemolen
Foothills Bible Church
at memorial service for John Tomlin



Patrick Davison/News Staff Photographer

Weary students lean on each other for support at a prayer service Tuesday evening at Light of the World Catholic Church.

A frantic man trying to get through a roadblock at Pierce Street and Weaver Avenue south of Columbine High School is restrained by officers.

Hal Stoelzle/News Staff Photographer

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

"It's going to be tough going on without them."

Matt Carmichael
Columbine senior

A girl raises her hand in prayer Thursday in Clement Park at the memorial to Columbine's fallen students and teacher.

Jessica Tefft
Special to the News

Rodolfo Gonzalez/News Staff Photographer

Wracked with sorrow, Columbine students in Clement Park grieve at the car of Rachel Scott, one of 12 slain students. Mourners turned Rachel's car into a shrine.

Debbie Ryan of Littleton touches crosses placed at the Columbine memorial in Clement Park. Ryan, who has two young children, was one of thousands who came to the park to pray for victims.

Patrick Davison
News Staff Photographer

"All of America cares for them and is praying for them."

President Bill Clinton

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

Authorities study suicide note

COLUMBINE from 2AA

bine student Saturday, the most complex criminal investigation in state history completed its fifth day.

A top priority for detectives was analyzing a note Harris purportedly wrote on the eve of the assault. The note, published Saturday by the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, blamed parents, teachers and students for the assault.

It was similar in tone and language to other writings attributed to the boys.

Jefferson County sheriff's deputy Steve Davis said Saturday morning that the note did not appear to be a hoax.

Later, however, he said investigators doubt its authenticity.

"We've done a lot of research on it," Davis said. "We've been working with several people, and at this time we have little reason to believe that either one of our suspects sent that note or authored it."

He said e-mail messages containing the note were received after the assault on the school, and investigators also believe it was written after the two were dead.

Of particular concern was a warning at the end of the note, predicting more violence on "April 26" — Monday.

That date also was mentioned in other materials gathered by investigators, and the potential for trouble was being taken seriously. Authorities recommended to Jefferson County school officials that they consider closing schools Monday.

But district spokesman Rick Kaufman said all schools except Columbine will be open.

Davis said "precautions have been taken" because of the note's threat of more violence.

"Schools are being looked at," he said. "Security is being beefed up."

He declined to discuss details.

At the same time, police continued to search for possible accomplices, doubting that Harris and Klebold could have carried out such a massive assault by themselves.

"It's kind of hard to go blazing into a school when you've got more than you can carry," Stone said. "It could be a third, it could be four, five, it could be six, it could be numerous."

Officials studied the journal, telephone records and Internet access for possible links to others who may have been involved in the plot.

Investigators have talked with other teen-agers with at least some knowledge of the boys' activities.

Videotapes from the school's security system have been sent to the FBI's national laboratory for analysis.

"They have the equipment necessary to enhance video images better than we can," Davis said.

Essdras M Suarez/News Staff Photographer

Elizabeth DiGiorgio, 15, of Arvada prays at Clement Park near the shrine for victims in the Columbine High School shootings.

> *"It's kind of hard to go blazing into a school when you've got more than you can carry."*
>
> **John Stone**
> Jefferson County sheriff

Those images could help answer the biggest question facing investigators: Was a third gunman in the school?

Some students reported seeing two gunmen in black trench coats. Others said one of the teen-agers wore a white T-shirt — launching speculation that at least one person besides Harris and Klebold was involved.

One of the two dead teen-agers — it wasn't clear which one — was wearing a white shirt and did not have a trench coat when officers found his body Tuesday. He may have shed the coat during the attack, Davis said.

Investigators also have searched for a teen-ager suspected of carrying some of the bombs onto the campus and fleeing before the shooting started.

Early Saturday evening, a bomb squad and detectives spent about 30 minutes at Harris' home near Columbine, looking inside the house and the back yard. It wasn't clear whether they retrieved anything.

Earlier in the day, President Clinton said he would ask for money and new gun laws to fight the tide of school violence. Gov. Bill Owens, who delivered the Republicans' response, addressed the attack's statement about American society.

"We live in a nation that is the richest and freest on Earth — the richest and freest in history," he said. "Yet events like this one warn us there is a virus loose within our culture — and too many of our young people are susceptible to it.

"What happened to the two boys who committed these crimes?"

A Lutheran minister who spoke with Klebold's parents said they were "devastated" by the tragedy at Columbine.

"They have no idea how this happened," said the Rev. Don Marxhausen, who contacted the family to lend emotional support. "They kind of feel they are in another world and they're trying to make sense of this."

Students described Harris and Klebold as loners who were picked on by other students and who hung out in a small group that called itself the Trench Coat Mafia.

"The diary is a time line of planning in this thing," Stone said. "This has been on their minds and they've been planning this particular thing, they have been building bombs for this particular thing for a considerable period of time, they have been acquiring weaponry for a considerable period of time.

"Now we want to find out where they got the stuff."

Among the evidence discovered by investigators was a sawed-off shotgun barrel. It lay in plain view on top of a dresser in the bedroom of one of the boys.

Stone would not say whether Harris or Klebold had the barrel, and he would not say who wrote the journal begun in April 1998.

The diary made it clear that mayhem and death on April 20, 1999 — the 110th anniversary of Hitler's birth — was the goal.

"There was a lot of German interaction, German words used in things," Stone said. "It was a Nazi kind of thing."

Inside the school "the shooting was pretty indiscriminate," Stone said.

But the boys thought a lot about how to do that.

"There were things like signals, hand signals that they would use, and other things in communications," Stone said. "It was exclusively dealing with this. 'Day One, we do this. Day Two, we do this. Day Three, we do this.' "

But not everything went the way they planned.

When the huge bomb in the kitchen didn't explode, evidence suggests, Harris and Klebold opened fire on it.

It still didn't explode, thwarting their biggest goal.

"They were going for a big kill," Stone said.

Staff writers Sue Lindsay, Hector Gutierrez and M.E. Sprengelmeyer contributed to this story.

Schools tighten security

By Burt Hubbard and Bartholomew Sullivan
News Staff Writers

High schools throughout the Denver area will remain on alert this week, with increased police and adult patrols in hallways and on school grounds.

At Chatfield High School, where Columbine High students begin split sessions Thursday, students will be required to show picture identification to enter their building beginning Monday.

Other districts have added armed police and adult monitors at high schools, restricted access and investigated various incidents.

At least three metro high schools received bomb threats last week.

Denver Public Schools swept three high schools Saturday for bombs and weapons and will sweep the other seven today and Monday, spokesman Mark Stevens said. Aurora swept its high schools Friday.

Nothing was found in either district.

Many school districts have reviewed crisis and disaster plans with local police and notified parents of increased security.

"We certainly are vigilant and alert," Englewood schools superintendent Roscoe Davidson.

The heightened security is in response to Tuesday's shooting and bombing at Columbine.

Officials denied it has anything to do with a note that surfaced Friday predicting more deaths Monday.

"The request for the photo IDs was established before those allegations came out," Jefferson County schools spokesman Rick Kaufman said Saturday. "We've increased security at all the schools."

All school buildings in the Jefferson County system will have personnel at every entrance that is not already secure.

Beginning Monday, Chatfield students will begin their split-sessions schedule. They will catch buses a half-hour early for a school day that will begin at 7 a.m. and end at 12:10 p.m. Each of the students' seven periods will be 40 minutes long.

No bus schedules have been established for the Columbine students, who will begin the afternoon sessions Thursday. Kaufman said Columbine students might not face the same photo-ID requirement, because many left wallets in backpacks that are still inside the secured building.

The state Department of Transportation is making duplicate driver's licenses available at no charge to Columbine faculty and students at its offices at 3262 S. Wadsworth Blvd. and at a licensing facility at Southwest Plaza.

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

Columbine High School

© Heirloom Fine Portraits, 1998

Left: A photo in last year's Columbine yearbook shows Eric Harris relaxing during his lunch break at the school. Right: A family photo of Dylan Klebold taken last year.

Killers' double lives fooled many

Parents, teachers, neighbors, authorities and even friends failed to see teens' dark side

By Ann Imse, Lynn Bartels and Dick Foster
News Staff Writers

One thing is certain about Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold: They were talented actors.

Even as they spent a year planning the deadly attack on their school, the Columbine High seniors convinced dozens of people that they were normal.

Teachers. Parents. Neighbors. Their probation officer. Even best buddies.

"They led a double life even their closest friends didn't know about," said one of them, senior Dustin Gorton.

Sue Klebold didn't recognize the boy who gunned down classmates and a teacher.

"It's so hard to see my son portrayed as a monster when that isn't the boy I know," she told her hairdresser, Dee Grantz.

Their Juvenile Court officer, the one who gave them glowing recommendations two months earlier, is wracked with anguish.

"These guys came in and put their best face on," District Attorney Dave Thomas said.

And yet, when Columbine students began speculating about which trench-coated teens rampaged through their school, many put Harris and Klebold on their short lists.

There was the video they'd made for class, showing them as gunmen mowing down athletes in the school hallway. And the weird jokes about killing people. And the violence in their class writing assignments.

To many, they were smart, clean-cut kids from successful, suburban homes.

But underneath that facade, they were planning mass murder.

Harris was 'well-behaved, polite'

Eric Harris was born April 9, 1981, in Wichita, Kan. His father was an Air Force transport pilot, and the family moved repeatedly, stopping in Ohio, Michigan and New York before returning in 1996 to Wayne and Kathy Harris' one-time home state of Colorado.

Across the nation, people remembered them last week.

Stan Sufar served with Wayne Harris on the neighborhood-association board in Oscoda, Mich.

Harris took his sons, Eric and Kevin, who was two years older, to fishing derbies, Sufar said.

In Plattsburgh, N.Y., Linda Carlson was Eric's sixth-grade English teacher. "He was a well-behaved, polite kid," Carlson said. "He was quiet. I don't believe he had to work hard for the grades he got."

Wayne Harris was an encouraging dad when 12-year-old Eric played Little League in Plattsburgh, Brenden LaPier told the *Plattsburgh Press Republican.*

Associated Press

A photo gallery of the victims of the Columbine killings surrounds photos of gunmen Dylan Klebold, left, and Eric Harris on the cover of *Time*. The magazine, dated May 3, will be available Monday.

When the Harrises moved to the Columbine area three years ago, they bought a $184,000 home on a quiet cul-de-sac. Wayne Harris took a job with Flight Safety Services Corp. in Englewood. His wife worked at an Englewood catering company, Everything Goes.

Neighbors found them quiet and likable.

Klebolds 'generous, caring people'

Dylan Klebold was born Sept. 9, 1981, when his family lived in Lakewood. His parents, Sue and Tom Klebold, had another son, Bryan, who was two years older.

Nick Baumgart, 17, a Columbine student, had known Dylan since he was little.

"He had good parents and a good family," Baumgart said.

The Klebolds live in a $328,000 cedar-and-glass home tucked between two dramatic red-rock outcroppings in Deer Creek Canyon.

Tom Klebold, 52, a former geophysicist, operates a mortgage-management business from his home. Susan, 50, worked for Arapahoe Community College, helping to provide accessibility for disabled students before moving on to the same position with the state consortium of community colleges.

They have been sprucing up a Congress Park two-story brick home they've converted into apartments.

Susan Klebold is the granddaughter of a once-prominent Columbus, Ohio, real estate developer, the late Leo Yassenoff, whose philanthropy in the Jewish community prompted them to name the city's Jewish Community Center after him.

Susan Klebold was brought up Jewish. Her husband wasn't. It isn't clear whether their children were raised in the Jewish faith.

"They are generous, giving, caring people," said Laura Waters, a child psychotherapist who rented the carriage house at the Klebolds' home.

Waters, who moved from the carriage house 2½ years ago but still rents from the Klebolds, saw nothing in the family or the boy that hinted of Tuesday's rampage.

"They were close. The family went on vacations together. They ate together. The kids had animals — cats and birds — that they kept to learn responsibility," Waters said.

They also had autonomy, because both parents were career people, she said.

Waters chalked up the loud music and noisy energy of Dylan and his older brother, Byron, to the boys' youth. "Teen-agers are teen-agers," she said.

The parents, she said, are "both very creative people, intellectual people."

"You could have serious conversations with them about life," she said.

One of the Klebolds' tenants, Mark Super, said Tom Klebold showed a genuine concern for his sons.

"On one occasion, he asked me about his older son, who I believe wasn't going to go to college," Super said. "He asked a tenant about it because I was closer in age to his son, and it showed me that he had a gen-

See HARRIS AND KLEBOLD on 25AA

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

Hal Stoelzle/News Staff Photographer

Detectives leave the home of Eric Harris after a search Saturday afternoon. They arrived in the Douglas County bomb-squad van.

HARRIS AND KLEBOLD from 24AA

uine concern about his children."

'People made fun of them'

At Columbine, Harris and Klebold were known as members of the Trench Coat Mafia.

Eleven members posed for a lighthearted ad in last year's yearbook, but Harris and Klebold were not among them, more into themselves than into the loose-knit group.

Some students thought them weird. Others thought them frightening.

"When you passed them in the hall, you didn't really want to be looking at them, because looking at them was scary," freshman Elaine Miller said.

They were always on the edge. In the senior class picture, shown on Page 16AA in today's *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, Harris and Klebold are the two in the top left, as far away from the others as possible.

But founding member Joe Stair said, "Nobody really knew who we were."

The "jocks" at school gave the group its name after some began wearing black cowboy dusters.

It was intended as an insult, Stair said. But the clique adopted it as a badge of honor.

"People made fun of them every day just for being different," said Pauline Colby, who hung out with the group for a short time last year.

Sophomore Ryan Stephens witnessed some of the verbal taunts heaped on the Trench Coat Mafia.

"When I heard someone say they wanted revenge, I said, 'That makes sense,' " he said.

Stair said the group joked about getting even with jocks, but he took it to mean a possible rumble.

When Harris and Klebold made the videotape showing themselves as gunmen shooting athletes, most students weren't surprised, said Chris Reilly, a football player.

Most said, "OK, whatever, freaks," he said.

Harris and Klebold wanted to show the film to the entire school, Reilly said.

But their film teacher, Garrett Talocco, said they couldn't do that, because it had guns in it, Reilly said. Talocco refused to comment.

Jessica Tefft/Special to the News

A sign expressing support for the parents of Dylan Klebold is attached to the entrance of the family's driveway.

Closest friends were deceived

The pair's closest friends seem to be the most deceived.

Repeatedly, still, they say Klebold and Harris were normal.

But others noticed things.

"(Harris) was into combat more than anyone else I've ever seen," said Columbine student Andrew Beard, who spoke German in the hallways to Klebold.

Harris would come to class in steel-toed combat boots and a German cross, he said.

Gorton, who played the war game Doom with them on the Internet and saw them every day, insisted the pair did not wear Nazi insignia. But a neighbor and some students say they saw it.

"I heard somebody saying they loved Marilyn Manson," Gorton said. "They both hated Marilyn Manson. The people who are saying things like that didn't know them."

2 impressed juvenile authorities

Juvenile authorities were deceived, too.

A year ago, they decided to let the bright, cooperative pair off easy when they were caught breaking into a car and stealing tools.

It turns out Harris and Klebold were already planning their attack, according to a diary Harris kept.

The juvenile court official who placed the two in a diversion program after they broke into a car certainly missed the signals.

"Klebold did a very nice job" wrote the officer. "If he is able to tap his potential and become self-motivated, he should do well in life."

Officials took Harris only slightly more seriously than his friend.

They also referred Harris' family to anger-management classes and a scare program that takes young offenders and their parents on a tour of an adult prison. It isn't clear whether he went.

Harris enjoyed his anger-management training, the officer wrote, describing him as "very articulate and intelligent."

He expected Harris and Klebold to graduate this spring.

The boys knew better.

Web postings a danger sign

By Ann Imse

News Staff Writer

Eric Harris' Internet postings should have set off alarms a year ago.

That's clear to John Dicke, a lawyer and psychologist who studied printouts of Web pages allegedly created by Harris.

They're full of Harris' plans for mass murder, his uncontrolled anger at people who offended him, his graphic plans for killing them.

They detail the deadly plans Harris and Dylan Klebold had begun to put into action by building and exploding their first pipe bombs.

Lots of people show that kind of anger, said Dicke, of Denver, after reading the 15-page download.

"But most of us have a conscience that steps in and says, 'No, you can't do that,' " he said.

"He doesn't have a conscience. He says he's the law and can do anything he wants."

Dicke cautioned that he made his judgment only from the Web pages and had never interviewed Harris.

But he said that if he had seen the Web pages a year ago, he would have recommended immediate assessment and long-term therapy.

"It is severely pathological writing," he said.

In a section detailing plans for mass murder in the downtown of a big city, Harris wrote: "I am the law, if you don't like it, you die. If I don't like you or I don't like what you want me to do, you die."

A Columbine parent says he downloaded the pages a year ago after Harris threatened his son and broke his windshield.

The father said that he gave the printouts to a Jefferson County deputy but that nothing was done.

A sheriff's spokesman says a suspicious-incident report about the parent's complaint was filed last year. But the department has not said why no action was taken.

It does not appear that juvenile officials knew about the pages when they decided on lenient treatment for Harris and Klebold after they were arrested for stealing tools from a car. They were placed in a diversion program, where Harris took an anger-management class.

That wouldn't help someone like Harris, Dicke said.

"Rage-reduction therapy with a kid like this is like shooting an elephant with a BB gun," he said.

Dicke says he would have been worried that Harris would turn to violence even back then.

"His frustration level is so high," he said.

"Everybody else has money, prestige, gifts. God, he wants them. He looks like he's about to explode."

The writings sound like a boy whose "basic sense of self" has been wounded, Dicke said.

He apparently feels that the important people in his life hurt his pride, that he has no control and that no one can empathize with his pain, he said.

By killing his rich, popular and athletic classmates, he apparently thought he could somehow be one of them and attain status by this act of infamy, Dicke said.

Clint Van Zandt, a former FBI profiler, who judged the youths solely on their rampage at the school and not the writings, also concluded that they were "emotionally wounded."

Van Zandt said it is not unusual for killers in such situations to commit suicide.

They had no desire to be arrested and placed under others' control, he said. This way, they wrote their own ending. "They are in the record books of nefarious young individuals," he noted.

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

Afterward, no tidy explanations

As community wrestles with the unthinkable, those who've been there offer no easy answers

By Guy Kelly
News Staff Writer

Jonesboro, Springfield, Pearl, West Paducah.

Columbine is one of them now, a community racked by anger and grief, fear and disbelief.

Today, residents of this shell-shocked community will throng to churches and pray for the victims and survivors of the nation's latest school shooting rampage.

In packed sanctuaries, they will weep and hug one another, the first step in what people who have lived through this horror say is a long, painful journey.

"It is just so overwhelming and unreal that it's nearly unbearable," said Karen McCuiston of Paducah, Ky., where a 14-year-old boy shot and killed three high school girls in December 1997.

"Everybody wants to know why, why did this happen to them? I wish I had the answer. I wish *someone* had the answer," said McCuiston, director of public information for the Paducah schools.

But from Edinboro, Pa., to Springfield, Ore., those who have lost loved ones in school shootings say that when all is said and done, there are no neat explanations to help us comprehend the incomprehensible.

Across the nation, doctors, police officers, students, teachers, parents and lawmakers are wrestling with why kids become killers and what can be done to stop them.

In the aftermath of such brutal acts in places where children were once considered safe, there are more questions than answers.

Should we turn schools into forts with armed guards? Have movies filled with murder desensitized kids to violence? How can this happen here?

The nation now knows that it can happen anywhere. Indeed, the day before the shootings at Columbine, McCuiston was in Denver to make a presentation called "It Can Happen to You: Prepare for the Unthinkable."

And when tragedy strikes, the toll often extends beyond the immediate victims. Many of those who have been through such horrible days say they will never be the same, and neither will their communities.

"The number of people affected is more widespread than you think originally," said Donald Monroe, former superintendent of Winnetka School District in Illinois, where 11 years ago a woman named Laurie Dan stepped into a second-grade classroom and killed a child and wounded five others.

"Every time an event like this happens, it brings it all back again. Every time an anniversary comes around, you're reminded," he said.

A tragedy such as the Oklahoma City bombing or the Columbine shootings sends off enormous shock waves that affect the whole community, those who have been through such events say.

Ben Margot/Associated Press

Pallbearers carry the casket containing the body of Ben Walker to a hearse after funeral services in Springfield, Ore., last year. Walker was killed in a shooting at a Springfield high school. One other student was killed and several were injured.

> *"Just make time for kids. You adults are who we look up to. A little time from you would be great."*
>
> **Donnie Dahl**
> Thurston High School senior
> Springfield, Ore.

And while those closest to the trauma suffer most, waves of grief are likely to wash over an entire city, and sometimes even a nation.

"You have to understand," retired journalist Gene Allen of Oklahoma City said after the bombing there. "This is not something that happened to someone else. This is something that happened to all of us."

After the violence, officials try to come up with ways to make sure it never happens again. But that's especially difficult in dealing with schools and teens.

Students at Columbine say the suspects were outcasts who were full of rage. Although there were plenty of signs they were capable of violence, it seems no one paid enough attention.

Turf battles and cliques are common enough in America's high schools. So are teen-agers who rebel through the clothes they wear or the hobbies they choose, whether it's collecting World War II weaponry or playing Dungeons & Dragons fantasy games.

But counselors, educators and students say that makes it difficult to tell the difference between teenage angst and deadly intent.

"There is no single answer," said Doug Robinson, programs director of the Center for the Prevention of School Violence, in Raleigh, N.C. "You've got to look at all the warning signs."

And then there's the complicated issue of security in schools.

In the days after a school shooting, there are inevitably demands that schools be treated like airports, with metal detectors, armed guards and searches. Students should be punished for even joking about violence, some say.

But at a meeting in the wake of last year's shooting in Springfield, Ore., Thurston High School principal Larry Bentz drew one of the biggest rounds of applause when he urged against an overreaction about school security.

"We should not turn our school into a fort," Bentz said. "We should not have metal detectors. It isn't an atmosphere I want my children to go to school in."

Donnie Dahl, a Thurston senior, said parents and other adults need to simply spend more time inside schools.

"Just make time for kids," he said. "You adults are who we look up to. A little time from you would be great."

He also said schools should form peer counseling groups that could work with students who have been making jokes or talking about violent acts.

"The group could intervene before he makes those jokes a reality," Dahl said.

But many programs don't spend enough time teaching youngsters how to respond when threats are made, said Denise Johnson, team leader of family- and intimate-violence prevention of the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

"There's training for suicide threats where students are taught how to talk to someone and how to get help," she said. "But there's no training for violence prevention, because people say they don't know if they should take the threats seriously."

One of the reasons youngsters don't tell on their peers is fear of retaliation.

Others say many students just don't take the threats seriously because talking and joking about violence is so commonplace in our society that it doesn't set off alarms anymore.

"Some people say that what happened is the inevitable result of living in a violent culture, and to some extent that's true," professor Peter Sheras of the University of Virginia said.

"We are desensitized to the violence to the point that this is what it takes to get people's attention. When I first heard about Columbine, my first impression was: 'Oh, boy, somebody has upped the ante. They've raised the bar on what you need to do to get attention.' "

Others had a much more personal reaction on hearing of the deadly shootings.

In Springfield, minutes after gunmen opened fire at Columbine, Bentz, the principal, broadcast the news over his school's intercom.

"I'd rather they hear it from me than from rumors," he said.

But still reeling from their own school rampage 11 months earlier, several students mistakenly thought the nightmare was happening again at Thurston. They bolted for the door.

"A whole bunch of people started to get scared and stuff. Some people started going toward the door thinking it was happening here," Thurston student Willie Kumle said. "A girl that sits next to me started crying."

James Ready, 17, a junior at Thurston, called the incident at Columbine creepy and surprising.

"I honestly thought ours would

See AFTER on 27AA

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

Sam Upshaw Jr./Associated Press

Michael Carneal, 14, is escorted from court in January 1998 after his arraignment in Paducah, Ky. In December he was sentenced to 25 years in prison in the killing of three classmates and the wounding of five others.

Steve Nagy/Associated Press

A student screams at the scene of a shooting at Heath High School in Paducah, Ky., on Dec. 1, 1997. Three students were killed and five wounded.

AFTER from 26AA

be the last one, that people would have grown up by now," he said.

But Ron Slaby, a Massachusetts psychologist and Harvard University lecturer, said teen-age boys are particularly susceptible to acting out on aggressive impulses, which can turn deadly when there's access to guns.

White male teen-agers have historically been the group with the largest suicide rate and the ones most likely to use guns to kill themselves.

The recent school shootings across the country indicate that some youths in this category are turning the alienation and depression they feel onto others, instead of themselves.

And when they do, the violence can have lasting effects on students who witness the carnage, and the community they live in.

Psychiatrists say some children develop an unreasonable fear of dying young and of disasters.

"We have to worry about this," said Dr. Lenore Terr, a San Francisco psychiatrist and expert in child and adolescent trauma. She is author of *Too Scared To Cry*, a book about the long-term effects on the 26 children in Chowchilla, Calif., who were buried alive in a 1976 school-bus kidnapping.

The incident can instill a pessimism about the future. They don't expect to live long, and they may act impulsively.

"It causes them to make big mistakes, like marrying too young or making poor choices when it comes to careers and education," Terr said.

Columbine will have to embark on a delicate and long-term program of care and counseling for those involved in last week's tragedy, including parents, McCuiston and Sheras said.

"You're going to be in it for the long haul when it comes to counseling," Paducah's McCuiston said.

"These kids were in a hostage situation. They weren't just shot at, then it was over. It was the most horrendous thing I've ever seen."

Sheras, of the University of Virginia, said officials will be dealing with this for years.

"People say, let's clean this up and get back to normal, but you just can't do that," Sheras said.

"The magnitude of the Columbine shootings is so huge, so overwhelming, that it's going to take years of dealing with emotions and sensitivities.

"You're going to have to emphasize community and sharing and openness," he said.

"It's a great challenge to do that, but it's possible."

SCHOOL SHOOTINGS

Columbine, April 20
Two heavily armed young men, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, storm through Columbine High School and, in a shooting rampage of unprecedented carnage in an American school, kill 15 people, including themselves, and wound 21.

Richmond, Va., June 15, 1998
Quinshawn Booker, a 14-year-old student who is angry at a classmate, opens fire in a crowded high school hallway, wounding a 45-year-old social studies teacher and a 74-year-old Head Start volunteer. Booker pleads guilty to five charges and will remain at a school for troubled boys until he completes its program.

Springfield, Ore., May 21, 1998
Kipland Kinkel, a 15-year-old student, enters Thurston High School with three guns and opens fire in a school cafeteria. He kills one student and wounds 19; another student dies later. His parents are found dead in his home. Kinkel awaits trial.

Fayetteville, Tenn., May 19, 1998
Jacob Davis, an 18-year-old honor student, fatally shoots a classmate in the school's parking lot. The victim was dating his ex-girlfriend. Davis awaits trial.

Edinboro, Pa., April 24, 1998
Andrew Wurst, 14, is arrested for shooting to death science teacher John Gillette in front of students at a middle school graduation dance. Two 14-year-old boys are wounded. Wurst will be tried as an adult.

Jonesboro, Ark., March 24, 1998
Four girls and a teacher are shot to death and 10 others are wounded by Mitchell Johnson, 13, and Andrew Golden, 11. The two boys activate a fire alarm and shoot their victims as they evacuate the building. They are found guilty of murder and committed to a state detention center. Under a controversial juvenile sentencing law, they will be allowed to walk out of jail by their 21st birthdays.

West Paducah, Ky., Dec. 1, 1997
Three students are killed and five wounded while praying in a school hallway. A 14-year-old, Michael Carneal, is arrested and pleads guilty but mentally ill to three counts of murder and six other charges related to the shootings. He was sentenced Dec. 17 to life in prison without possibility of parole for 25 years.

Pearl, Miss., Oct. 1, 1997
Luke Woodham, 16, stabs his mother to death before going to Pearl High School and shooting nine students. Two die, including Woodham's ex-girlfriend; seven others are wounded. Woodham is convicted as an adult in June 1998. He is serving three life sentences.

Moses Lake, Wash., Feb. 2, 1996
Barry Loukaitis, 14, walks into algebra class at a junior high school and opens fire with a hunting rifle. The teacher and two students are killed, and one student is wounded. He is convicted in 1997 of two counts of aggravated first-degree murder and sentenced to two life terms without parole.

Winnetka, Ill., May 20, 1988
A mentally ill woman named Laurie Dann steps into a second-grade classroom with two handguns and opens fire, killing a child and wounding five others. Dann flees the school and later kills herself.

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

Lawmen defend response times, tactics

'They were as quick as any SWAT team,' says L.A. sheriff's official who reviewed incident

By Gary Massaro
News Staff Writer

Guns and grenades, carnage and confusion confronted police as they entered the killing zone of Columbine High School on Tuesday.

The school was littered with dozens of homemade bombs, bloody bodies and hysterical students in hiding — each one a potential killer, officers said.

"We've got kids shot, shots fired, kids down and shots fired by deputies," Jefferson County sheriff's Lt. Terry Manwaring told the first 11 SWAT officers at the scene.

That was about 11:40 a.m., 15 minutes after the first 911 call from the school, officers said.

Police are facing mounting criticism and questions after the shooting, which left 15 dead. Police didn't secure the high school until 4½ hours after the deadly rampage by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold began.

Students and others have complained that wounded teacher Dave Sanders bled to death because help was too slow in coming. Sanders was slumped over in a classroom, bleeding from two bullet wounds he sustained minutes after the gunmen stormed the school.

By the time paramedics reached Sanders, he was dead, said Dr. Chris Colwell of Denver Health Medical Center, triage director at the scene.

"We weren't going to be able to save him," he said. "But he's the one, you wonder, had you been able to get there three hours earlier, whether we would have been able to. You just don't know."

Police aren't pleased, either.

"The information never came to us that there was a teacher bleeding in a classroom," Denver police Capt. Vince DiManna said.

Less than an hour after the first 911 call, DiManna led one of the first two SWAT teams to enter the building.

Even if the SWAT team members had information about Sanders' location, they would have had to search and secure each room leading to the classroom because they didn't know where the gunmen were, DiManna said.

"We kept expecting them to be barricaded, setting up an ambush, getting ready for their last hurrah," DiManna said.

Police bristle at the notion that they could have acted quicker, charging toward the sound of gunfire and confronting the teen gunmen, perhaps preventing some of the deaths.

"We're not the military. We can't have collateral damage. Our job was to save the lives of as many innocent as we could," said Denver police Lt. Frank Vessa, a SWAT commander.

Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies reviewing the incident said officers followed proper procedure for securing a shooting site.

"They were as quick as any SWAT team," said Los Angeles sheriff's Sgt. Jack Ewell. "I know it's very tragic some students were killed. But from a SWAT side, we look how many they were able to save."

Marc Piscotty/News Staff Photographer

Denver police Capt. Vince DiManna pauses while answering questions at police headquarters about his involvement in the rescue of students from Columbine High School during Tuesday's tragedy. DiManna's son was inside the school during the rampage.

The confrontation for law officers began at 11:27 a.m., when Jefferson County sheriff's Deputy Neil Gardner, stationed at the school, traded shots with the gunmen.

Gardner called for help. Two other deputies arrived at 11:29. They traded shots with the killers.

Nine minutes later, Lt. Terry Manwaring, Jefferson County's SWAT commander, arrived and called for help from all Denver-area police.

Manwaring commanded the operation throughout, DiManna said.

DiManna, whose son was inside the school, arrived about 11:45 a.m.

The first SWAT officers entered the front of the school about noon. A second team led by DiManna approached the rear about the same time. DiManna's team exchanged gunfire with the killers while rescuing a wounded boy lying outside the building. They approached the building again and retrieved the body of a girl.

They entered the building on a third approach at 12:15 p.m., DiManna said. He heard no gunfire.

"But there were fire alarms going off, there was the hiss of water gushing from a pipe in the ceiling in the cafeteria," DiManna said. "So we don't know if there was additional gunfire, because we couldn't hear it."

The search through the cafeteria was slowed because of bombs.

"Most of the bombs were on the stairs," DiManna said. "Were there timers on them? Was there a trip wire running on the top of the carpet waiting for someone to shuffle his foot into it? We had to check each one.

"Then we find kids: kids hiding in walk-in coolers, kids hiding in restrooms, kids hiding in classrooms. We've got to get these kids out. They're in shock. So we have to lead them out, past the bombs. We have to tell them to hold hands, hold someone's belt, hold anything so we stay in line."

Television pictures of SWAT teams standing behind an armored car and firetrucks were misleading, DiManna said.

"That was like 1:30, 2 o'clock. That was the third wave of SWAT team officers to arrive," DiManna said. "Basically, the shooting was done."

DiManna said the search for survivors and the killers was hampered by the following:

- Officers were forced to conduct a tedious search of more than 250 rooms and closets because they didn't know where the killers were. In some rooms, they found cowering students who had to be led to safety, past the bombs. They couldn't leave the students behind because they didn't know where the gunmen were.
- Police were warned that the killers were changing clothes to blend in with fleeing students. So officers frisked all students before leading them to safety.
- Some students hid behind locked doors. So officers had to use a battering ram to break in.
- Officers were told there could be as many as six killers.
- Police had only a hard-to-read floor plan of the school.
- Officers had trouble communicating because there was no universal radio channel for the SWAT officers, who came from at least five jurisdictions.

Staff writers Brian Weber and Lisa Levitt Ryckman contributed to this story.

Gunmen may have died in minutes

By Lou Kilzer
News Staff Writer

The gunmen in the Columbine High shooting might have committed suicide minutes after the killing began, authorities said.

Wayne Holverson, a Jefferson County sheriff's deputy, said reports that the suspects continued firing for an hour or more are mistaken.

"That's cover fire for officers that are going in," he said. "That is not the suspects sitting in there for an hour and shooting people."

He said the killers could have been dead 15 minutes after they stormed the building.

Other Jefferson County officials said it's too soon to tell. Lt. David Taylor said the 15-minute estimate may be correct, "but if it is, it's a pure guess."

Both officers were spokesmen at the command center near Columbine.

Capt. Ray Fleer said an official chronology will be released after the crime-scene investigation is finished this week.

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

WHERE TO DONATE

INDIVIDUAL SURVIVORS

■ The Patrick Ireland and Family Fund, c/o Northwest United Federal Credit Union, 6320 Old Wadsworth Blvd., P.O. Box 547, Arvada, CO 80001

■ The Lance Kirklin Columbine High School Victim Survivors Fund, donations may be made at any First Bank or sent to First Bank, P.O. Box 2297, Littleton, CO 80161.

Also, the Lance Kirklin Support Fund, c/o Everen Securities, 8005 S. Chester St., Suite 300, Englewood, CO 80112. Attention: Bret Roberts. Information: (303) 925-8500 or (800) 300-9648.

■ Citywide Bank has created a healing fund and individual funds for Isaiah Shoels and Lance Kirklin. (303) 365-3673. Drop off donations at any of the seven Citywide locations, or mail them to P.O. Box 128, Aurora, CO 80040.

MEMORIAL FUNDS

■ The Steven R. Curnow Memorial Fund, c/o First Bank.

■ Kelly Fleming memorial donations, Jefferson County Victim Advocates, c/o Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, 200 Jefferson County Parkway, Golden, CO 80401.

■ Daniel Mauser memorial donations, Foundation for Children and Aging, 1 Elmwood Ave., Kansas City, KS 66103.

■ Dan Rohrbough, memorial donations, the Petrone Scholarship Fund, c/o Norwest Bank, 8500 W. Bowles Ave., Littleton, CO 80123

IN GENERAL

■ The *Denver Rocky Mountain News* has established a memorial fund for victims of the Columbine High School tragedy. Send contributions to Columbine Memorial Fund, c/o the Jefferson Foundation, 809 Quail St., Building 1, Lakewood, CO 80215.

■ The United Way has established a Healing Fund to support victims and their families as well as local violence-prevention programs and agencies. Send contributions to the Healing Fund, P.O. Box 46531, Denver, CO 80201.

FUNERALS

TODAY

KELLY FLEMING and **DANIEL MAUSER**, 5:15 p.m., St. Francis Cabrini Catholic Church, 6673 W. Chatfield Ave.

MONDAY

WILLIAM DAVID SANDERS, 10 a.m., Trinity Christian Center, 6500 W. Coal Mine Ave.

CASSIE BERNALL, 11 a.m., at West Bowles Community Church, 12325 W. Bowles Ave. Tributes: 8:30 to 10 a.m., Sunday, at West Bowles Community Church, 12325 W. Bowles Ave. Visitation: 4 to 6 p.m., today at Horan & McConaty Funeral Home, 3101 S. Wadsworth Blvd.

LAUREN TOWNSEND, Noon, Foothills Bible Church, 6100 S. Devinney Way. Visitation: 3 to 7 p.m., Sunday, Drinkwine Family Mortuary, 999 W. Littleton Blvd.

DANIEL ROHRBOUGH, 2 p.m., Grace Presbyterian Church, 251 E. Sterne Blvd.

TUESDAY

MATTHEW KECHTER, 10 a.m., at St. Francis Cabrini Catholic Church, 6673 W. Chatfield Ave.

KYLE VELASQUEZ, 10:30 a.m., St. James Presbyterian Church, 3601 Belleview Ave. Visitation: 5 to 8 p.m. Monday at Drinkwine Family Mortuary, 999 W. Littleton Blvd.

COREY DePOOTER, 1:30 p.m., Trinity Christian Center, 6500 W. Coal Mine Ave.

WEDNESDAY

STEVEN CURNOW, 10 a.m., Trinity Christian Center, 6500 W. Coal Mine Ave.

THURSDAY

ISAIAH SHOELS, noon, Heritage Christian Center, 9495 E. Florida Ave. Visitation: Pipkin Mortuary, 2531 Ogden St.

At a cross on a hill behind Columbine High School, mourners take turns Saturday reading, praying and reflecting on what happened Tuesday.

Ken Papaleo
News Staff
Photographer

Clergy, too, need shoulders

Rabbis, ministers affected as much as those they serve

By M.E. Sprengelmeyer
News Staff Writer

In a time like this, people look to their spiritual leaders for strength. But sometimes, even the clergy cry.

When they face their grieving flocks this morning, some pastors and ministers from the area around Columbine High School will be working through their own grief after a week on the front lines of the recovery battle.

They look to a higher power. They get their own counseling. They cross secular lines and band together. And sometimes, they just let the tears flow.

"It's good to cry every now and then," said the Rev. Don Marxhausen, who admitted it was tough getting through a sermon last week.

When the shooting erupted, Marxhausen and a physician friend were in Clement Park for a stroll near the campus. They saw the first police cars arrive and rushed toward the school, praying that the physician's son, a Columbine student, was OK.

For the next several hours, Marxhausen and other clergy and counselors gathered at Leawood Elementary School. They comforted hundreds of horrified students who escaped, and parents agonizing about missing children.

Miller

Marxhausen thought of his daughter and son, both Columbine graduates.

"I wish I could comfort her more. I wish I could hold her," he said, referring to his daughter. "My son ... feels he has lost a piece of his past."

The Rev. Joel Miller of Columbine Unitarian-Universalist Church was one of the first on the scene. He saw children with blood on their clothes, but the horror didn't sink in until SWAT-team members who had been inside the school came to console survivors, Miller said.

"They needed to see us alive, I could tell," Miller said. "When I saw the Denver SWAT team come in, I knew it was a horrible situation. All I had to do was look them in the eyes."

Some people turn to the clergy for comfort and answers, but Miller said he has been calling a counselor every day to help deal with his anger.

"Pastors are used to being with people in the most hideous tragedies, maybe even a family of 10 (in grief), but not this," he said.

"I saw faces of hundreds of deeply anguished and hundreds of children who had witnessed a horrible murder. The only thing I have to say is, I don't know what it means yet."

He raises his voice. "I'm furious," he said, thinking the nation's leaders, the media and all adults set a bad example that played a role in the killing. He said he'll tell his congregation, "Take your anger and make the world a better place."

Area clergy members are trying to set a good example for children by setting spiritual differences aside to share ideas to help victims' families.

"Ministers like to give answers, and usually there aren't easy answers," Miller said. "If there were, we wouldn't need laws."

In the meantime, Marxhausen is pondering a summertime sabbatical and dreaming of the day when life gets back to normal.

"I function because I believe God will heal. It's built into the system," Marxhausen said. "The old saying is, 'If it doesn't kill you, it will make you stronger.' "

Tourniquet no answer to school violence

Experts: Preventive efforts imperative

By Michael Romano
News Staff Writer

Experts on school violence have lots of ideas, but are sure about only one thing: There is no single, quick fix.

"It takes a communitywide effort, with representation for every constituency," said June Arnette, associate director of the National School Safety Center, in Westlake Village, Calif.

And it needs to be specific to each community.

For some districts, Arnette said, metal detectors and school uniforms might work, for others random drug searches.

"The first step is to prepare a profile of the school and find out what its problems are," said Carlos Sundermann, program director for the National Resource Center for Safe Schools, a group based in Portland, Ore.

Teachers, administrators and students must work with police, social-service agencies, churches and the juvenile-justice system, he said.

The National Center for School Safety has 40 strategies, said Ronald Stephens, executive director.

These include establishing clear standards of behavior for all students, enforcing rules fairly and consistently, cultivating parental support, controlling access to the campus, creating partnerships with outside agencies, and providing adequate adult supervision.

Other elements involve dress codes, peer-mediation programs, picture IDs and better teacher training programs.

In North Carolina, the Center for the Prevention of School Violence stresses the "three P's" of school safety — place, people and purpose, said Pamela Riley, executive director.

■ "Place" means focusing on the physical environment: fencing and lighting, metal detectors, surveillance cameras, book-bag policies and ID tags.

■ "People" means addressing the relationships of everyone within the school: student to student, student to staff member, student to parent and student to administrator.

■ "Purpose" means getting teachers back to teaching and away from playing police and social worker, which Riley said may mean more police in schools.

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE

Future holds more hope than hate

Kim Franke-Folstad

I'm not sure what type of behavior works best in this kind of situation.

Maybe it requires a little anger. Maybe courage. Or perhaps it's just good old-fashioned school pride, along with a big dose of obstinacy.

Whatever it takes, I hope the kids at Columbine High School can find the fortitude to keep proving to themselves — and to the world — that they are tougher and more determined than the murderers who tried to blow them all away on Tuesday.

And I can't think of a better way for the survivors to thumb their collective nose at their classmates' crazy plans than to walk back into the school in the fall with their heads held high and their arms linked in defiance.

It won't be easy.

When Jefferson County Schools Superintendent Jane Hammond announced Thursday that Columbine will definitely reopen for the next school year, the students' initial reaction was mixed. Many said they were thrilled by the news, but others were more hesitant about returning to the hallways and classrooms where their friends and a beloved teacher — and the killers — had died.

Their ambivalence is understandable: Although their battered school may be repaired by September, those youngsters will feel damaged for a long, long time. Perhaps forever.

But the best revenge against the terrorists who declared war on Columbine's classes of 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 will be the students' ability to pull together and get past this — and those doors.

If ever there was a group of kids who could manage it, this bunch has the right stuff.

On Tuesday I watched as they fought back their terror and thought only about finding their parents (so they wouldn't be afraid) and their friends (so they'd know they were safe). Their concern for their teachers and school staff was inspiring.

In the sad days since then, I have seen them cry for each other, cling to each other and pray for each other in a way that could only have bonded them even more tightly together.

I have never been more impressed by the maturity, thoughtfulness and backbone of my children's generation.

I know we often say it isn't so.

I know we have a tendency to throw up our hands, shake our heads and mutter about the misguided youth of today.

But the most reassuring truth to come out of this tragedy so far is that there really are more good kids than bad, and the future holds more hope than hate. Columbine High School can be a symbol of that hope, when its classrooms and playing fields are once again places where young people excel.

When their sadness subsides, just a little, perhaps those teens who were reluctant to return will reconsider.

Certainly, they wouldn't be expected to go back and pretend nothing ever happened at Columbine. But they could go on and prove that what they had together with their fellow students was bigger than this tragedy.

And that what they had was better than even they knew, until someone tried to take it away.

Kim Franke-Folstad's column appears Sunday, Monday and Wednesday. (303) 892-5406 or kfranke1@aol.com.

Let's take to heart the lesson we've learned

Gene Amole

Our hearts.

As our city mourns, it is difficult to see what good can come from the Columbine High School tragedy. But maybe there is something positive. It occurred to me Thursday as I watched Katie Couric's touching interview on NBC's *Today* show with Columbine student Craig Scott, whose sister was killed Tuesday.

It was the loving way he spoke of her, about her accomplishments in school, her place in her family, the fondness she had for her friends and her school. Those around the nation who watched will not soon forget it. He was dry-eyed and composed as he spoke, and he seemed determined to pay her tribute without breaking into tears himself.

Having raised four children, I know, as many parents do, that love and devotion do not always prevail in even the best of families. Sibling rivalries can erupt into heated arguments over the most trivial incidents. Kids will scream at each other, "I hate you! I hate you!"

Sometimes their disputes become so intense that a parent often wonders if their children really do hate each other. This is not to say that children sometimes don't behave the same way toward their parents. There is no perfect family.

Television's nonstop, around-the-clock coverage of the tragedy has made all of us an extension of the aggrieved families. We weep as they do. We are horrified as they are. We mourn each lost life as though it were one of ours. We bring flowers to watch them become covered with snow. We want to reach through our television screens to embrace those who are hurting so much.

What does this say about us? That we are compassionate? Of course. That we are shocked by barbarism? Certainly. That we are dumbfounded as to the reason for the killings? Yes. That we are determined to put an end to violence if we possibly can? By all means.

But there is something else going on here that is not quite so apparent. I think the tragedy is bringing our families closer together. Brothers and sisters who have been at war with each other are putting themselves in the place of young Craig Scott and are seeing their siblings in a different light.

They realize that, all differences aside, they really do love each other and can't imagine life without the other. To lose a brother or a sister is like losing a part of one's self.

And as we watched survivors run into the arms of their parents, they begin to understand what true love can mean. And as parents wait to learn the fate of their children, they endure an agony like no other.

These images on television and in newspaper photographs are unforgettable. They will remain imprinted in our memories as long as we live. They do more than that. They turn us inward to our own loved ones. It is as though young Craig Scott were our son, or our brother, and that his sister was our loss, too.

Just as these stories and images have drawn our families closer together, they have drawn our community closer together, too. We have much in common with Oklahoma City residents who were drawn together by the bombing of the Murrah federal building.

And so through our tears, we are able to see each other with a true love that we may not have realized has been in our hearts all along.

Gene Amole's column appears Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. (gamole@aol.com)

DENVER SQUARE
ed STEIN
WHY IS IT THE ONLY TIME WE COME TOGETHER IS WHEN SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPENS?
I THINK YOU'VE GOT IT BACKWARDS, DAD.
IF WE WEREN'T ALREADY TOGETHER, WE WOULDN'T ALL BE HERE NOW.
e-mail – stein@denver-rmn.com

Bottom line: Officers saved lives, L.A. cop says

Bill Johnson

It *was* Jack I saw on TV standing outside Columbine.

He'd arrived in town early Thursday. Quite reluctantly, he would later say. After all, it had been only a few hours since his guys had to kill a bank robber who wouldn't give up and later came at them on a Los Angeles freeway.

Jack is my buddy. We met in high school, roomed in college. He was my best man. Yet I hadn't seen him in three years. And then two high school boys killed a teacher, 12 classmates and, later, themselves. Our paths crossed again.

He is a sheriff's sergeant in L.A., assigned to the special-weapons team, which is a job he's had almost since we got out of college nearly 20 years ago. He found himself at Columbine after the Jefferson County sheriff said he and a sergeant from the bomb squad could take a look at what happened Tuesday, to examine the layout, chat with officers who responded. Perhaps they could learn something.

Through the years, Jack has rarely spoken of what he does. I've always guessed it's because a lot of it is the bank-robber-on-the-freeway kind of ugliness. A few years ago, I know, they gave him a medal for going in alone to rescue office workers being fired at by a disgruntled employee. By the time he reached the shooter, the man had killed himself.

Jack talked softly after he'd walked through Columbine, seen the carnage. "They did a good job," he says. "It's never like you see it in the movies."

Imagine, he says, walking into a building you aren't familiar with. There's gunfire, bombs exploding. Dead and wounded lie on the floor. "And then you encounter scores of kids who've just seen their friends killed, who are screaming and out of their minds with fear.

"And they think you are one of *them*, the bad guys. So the one thing you need — information — you can't get, because first you have to console and convince them."

Time. It's all taking time. "What you don't do is get killed. You are of no use to anyone then," he says.

Pipe bombs. And they are everywhere. George Gomez, the bomb-squad sergeant, says the most he'd ever encountered in L.A. is 13. There were more than twice as many in Columbine. "And there is no such thing as a bomb you can walk past and say it's safe," he says.

I ask Jack about Dave Sanders, the teacher shot in the early minutes of the shooting spree who bled to death after lying more than three hours locked in a school room.

"Bad luck," he says simply. "In a perfect world, he would have been behind the first door they opened. From what I've seen, no one died because the officers went too slow, and none of them died because they went too fast. That's the bottom line."

What few people are recognizing, he says, is the number of children the officers *saved*. "They were encountering hundreds of kids they have to maneuver through and around the bombs. That takes time.

"Instead of focusing on the 15 you can't help, you concentrate on the hundreds you *can* save."

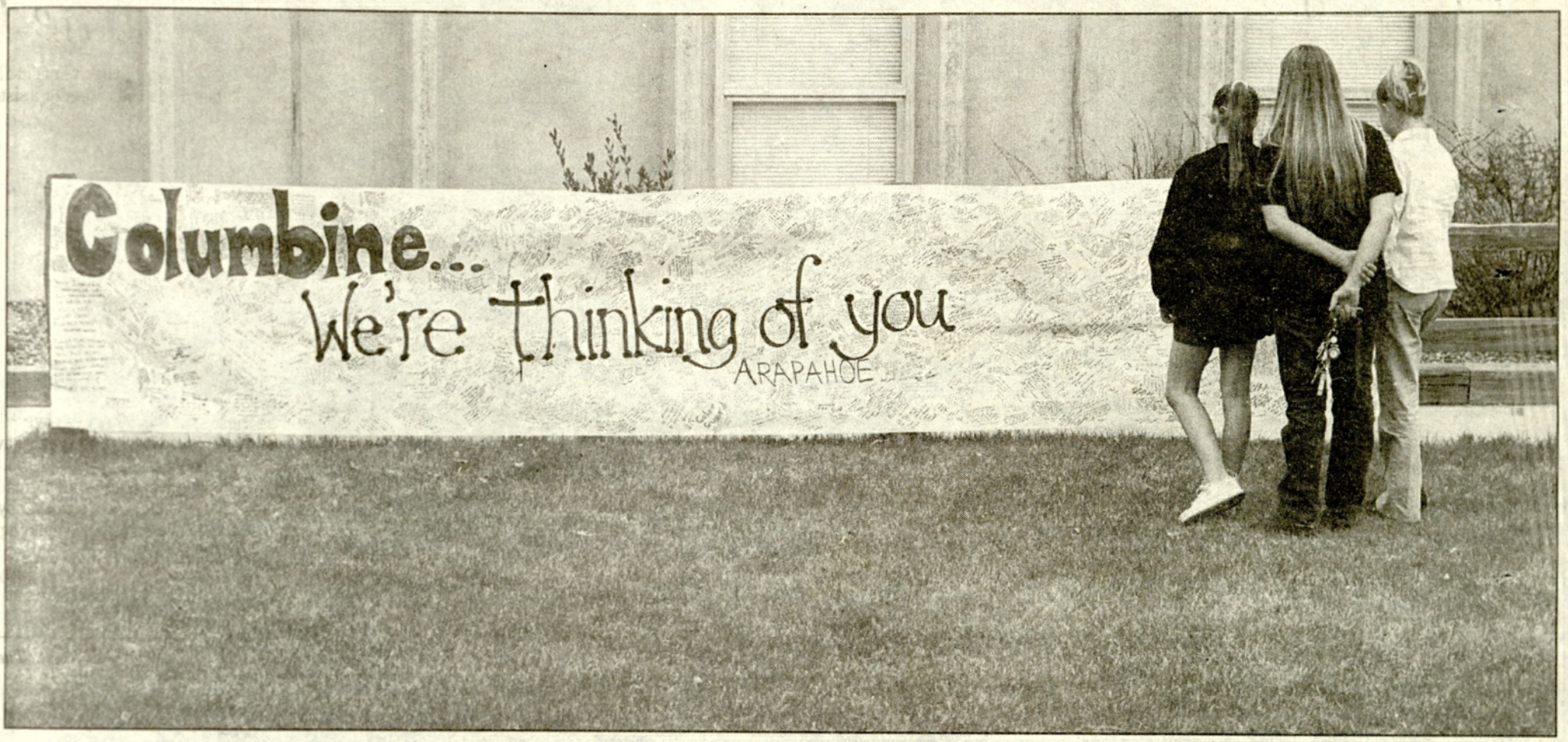
I ask him whether he's learned anything. He pauses awhile. "I'll just say I couldn't have done it any better. I could have done it differently, yes, but it wouldn't have been necessarily any better.

"And I don't know these guys. I wouldn't lie or cover for them. But the word *hero* pretty much does cover what they did."

We agree that three years is too long. Next time, it'll be under better circumstances.

Bill Johnson's column appears Sunday, Wednesday and Friday. Rockybj@aol.com or (303) 892-2763.

TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE



Essdras M Suarez/News Staff Photographer

Three area residents read messages of sympathy at Leawood Elementary School. More than 1,000 Arapahoe High School students signed the banner.

Into the heart of darkness

Two killers lived in suburbs, but inhabited their own twilight world

By Robert Denerstein
News Staff Writer

ESSAY

Most of the time, Denver is a city that walks with its chest puffed out.

We may not always be convinced that we're equal to other big cities, but we're unwilling to admit deficiency. Denver's the city that wins Super Bowls and hoists Stanley Cups in the air, the city that builds libraries and airports and revitalizes a part of its downtown that had been left for dead. Liberated from the fluctuations of a boom-or-bust economy, Denver finally has taken its place in the national limelight, a city that matters.

During the past decade, business stories seem to have dominated the news — and much of that news has been good. High-tech companies have given the area a cutting-edge pulse. The cable TV industry grew to maturity here. Housing prices are embarrassingly good and, by all indications, still on the rise. There's more of everything these days — better restaurants, better shops, lots of places to spend money and lots of money to spend.

Those of us in the journalism business are always searching for defining moments, events that become touchstones. This week we may have found one; only, unlike most of the civic events that preceded it, it could not be hyped or pointed to with pride. The murders inside Columbine High School — at the hands of two of its own students — went against the optimistic grain, taking us into a heart of darkness that's barely visible in our usually sunny streets.

More than children died last week. Some of the city's innocence died along with them, throwing us into a state of sorrow and consternation. The violence — impossible to explain — wasn't the scream of impoverished misfits, but of middle-class children venting a rage that didn't seem to fit the trappings of their lives: One of them drove a BMW. They played computer games. They had access to the abundance of the metropolitan area that sprawled around them.

The Columbine tragedy may not have signaled a change in the Denver area so much as it underscored changes that already have occurred. We're now a grown-up metropolitan area, a gaggle of malls and multiplexes, a place where the highways can mean glut, road rage and ceaseless activity. From now on, we have to be a little more careful about how we use the word "community."

Again and again, people expressed surprise that it happened here. The event prompted calls from out of town. My oldest daughter, a federal prosecutor in New York City who has lived in Denver and is no stranger to bizarre criminal activity, called in shock, stunned that Denver (she thinks of the whole metro area as "Denver") had sustained such a blow. She said watching the kids of Columbine on CNN had made her cry.

"You certainly don't expect middle-class kids to go around killing each other," she said. "So many lives are ruined. These kids are not going to be able to adjust to going back to that school. How can they? Clearly, the kids who did the shooting had no conception of what life is.

"And there's something really disconcerting about the fact that the killers were so young. It makes it more difficult to hate them. It's more like, 'How did this happen?' It shocks the conscience."

A friend in Los Angeles called, wanting to know what the devil was going on in Denver. He's an actor, who once made a film here.

I had nothing to tell him. The city, it seems, has passed through a portal — and none of us know what is on the other side. It is as if a giant alarm clock has gone off, shocking us into a horrible new consciousness.

One thing's certain: The psychology of the city seemed different in the sorrowful wake of Columbine. I saw exhaustion and sadness in the eyes of newsroom colleagues who were less flip than usual. The police sirens I heard in the days following the shooting sounded more eerie than before. The beat of helicopter blades over downtown seemed more ominous.

This event had defining powers that other crimes do not because it happened in a school and was the work of students, the grisliest student project in the history of American education. There's the rub. We assume children are safe in school. We assume lives in the manicured suburbs aren't fueled by a rage that seems entirely out of proportion to any wrongs the killers may have suffered. Kids who perceived themselves as victims set out to obtain revenge, bloodshed as an entitlement.

The city was consumed. The talk shows had temporarily abandoned the topics of the moment: a bill to allow carrying of concealed weapons (since dropped), endless rant about the injustices of photo radar and speculation about whether John Elway would continue a fabled football career.

It's far too early to draw conclusions about Columbine. But, for me, the killings at that high school point to the hidden life of many youngsters. The Trench Coat Mafia, the preposterous name the killers had chosen for themselves, was defined less by geography, public image and robust economics than by electronic communications, subterfuge and illicit activity.

The Trench Coat Mafia was part of the world of Internet and computer games.

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, Columbine seniors, dressed in long black coats, avoiding the trappings of designer labels. They played computer games and may have dabbled in neo-Nazism. They spoke German to each other. They did their craven work on Adolf Hitler's birthday. They ate and slept in the suburbs, but lived in a borderless fantasy world that made ample room for hatred.

They despised athletes in a community that adores them — not just in high school but in the professional ranks, as well. They reportedly hated people of color, even though they lived in an area without much racial diversity. Their hatreds were as bloodless as tough talk in an Internet chat room. They killed mostly at random, making a few exceptions. They saw a black child and a white Christian girl as legitimate targets of their rage.

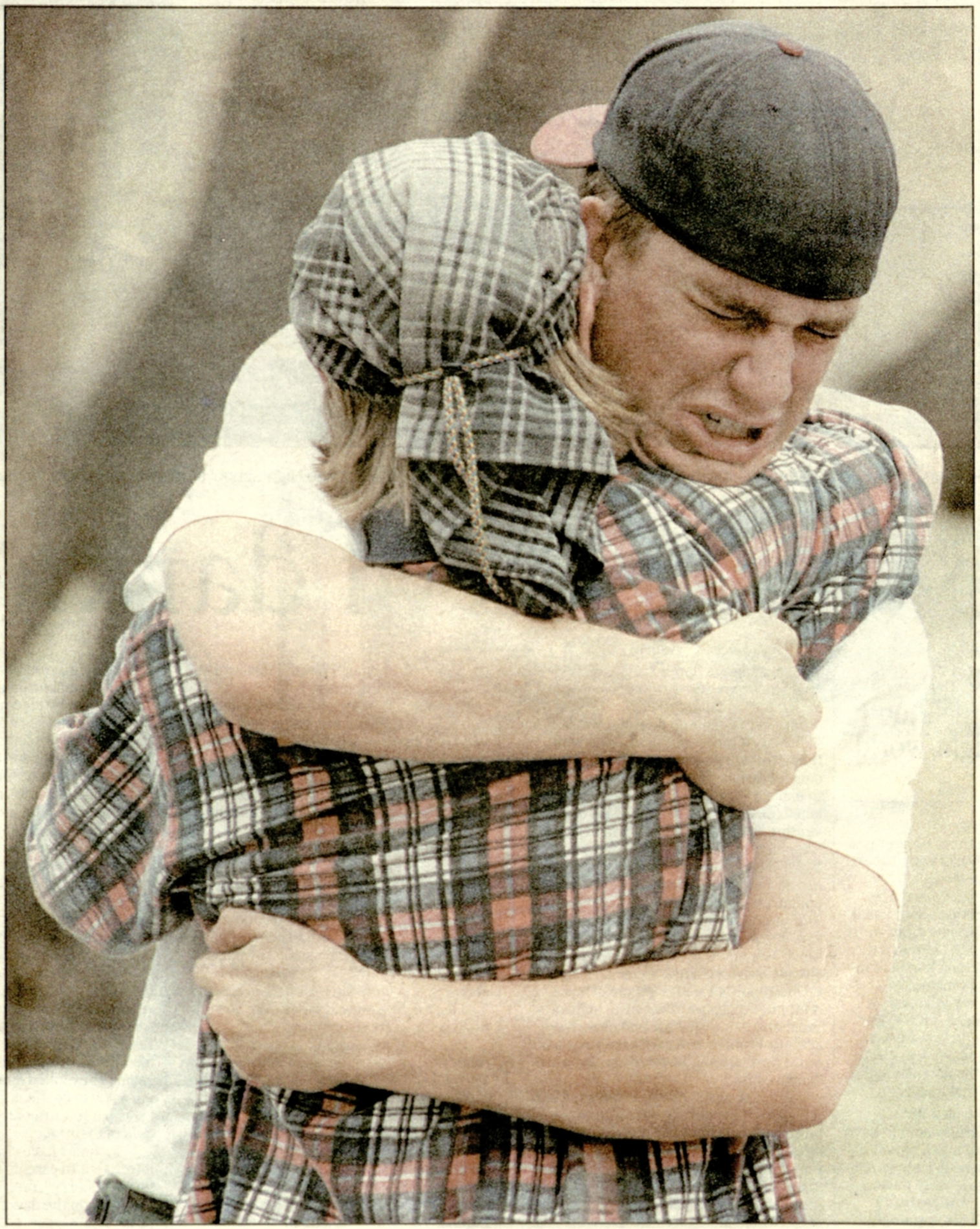
Yes, things have changed. Listen to this letter sent to parents by the superintendent for the Cherry Creek schools, Robert D. Tschirki, on the day after the tears began to flow.

"This terrible event brings reality to our doorstep. . . . We know you want assurance that such an event will never happen here. What we learned yesterday is something we fearfully push to the back of our minds — it can happen here. It can happen anywhere."

Unincorporated Jefferson County, with its sprawl and growth, is Anywhere U.S.A. In that America, there's nowhere to hide. Anywhere is everywhere.

Robert Denerstein is the film critic and a former news editor of the Denver Rocky Mountain News.

APRIL 20, 1999



George Kochaniec Jr./News Staff Photographer

Students hug outside Columbine High School on Tuesday after two of their classmates fatally shot 13 people. Twenty-three others were injured. Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, the teens responsible for the worst school shooting in U.S. history, were later found dead of self-inflicted gunshot wounds in the school library.